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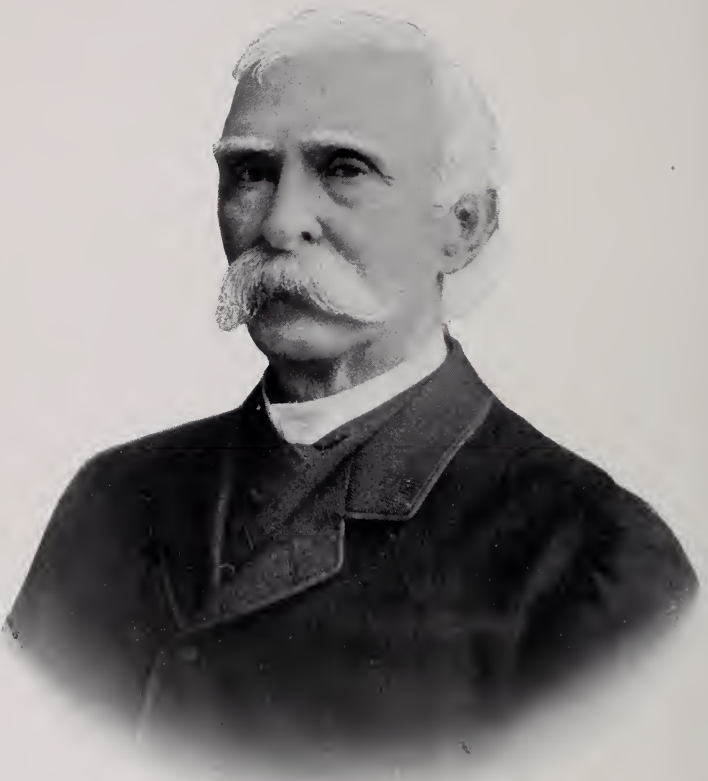
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Virginia

March 27<sup>th</sup> - 1924







*Mr. L. P. Proctor*

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

AND

REMINISCENCES

OF AN

OCTOGENARIAN.

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BY THOMAS L. PRESTON.

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## PREFACE.

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Whilst visiting Southwest Virginia I was often urged by my relatives and friends (descendants of associates of a past generation) to write some "historical sketches" of the earliest patents and settlers of that section, and also of those traditions which were fast fading from the memories of the "oldest inhabitants," and which I alone could recall. This obligation to my friends was pressed with renewed earnestness in the autumn of 1897, and in order partially to discharge it, I, aided by my friends, Judge F. B. Hutton and others, examined the records of Washington county, so as to verify dates and refresh my memory about the periods of many incidents.

The Mayor of Abingdon did me the kindness to put the records of the town into my hands and allowed me to make such extracts from them as I chose. With these aids and with court papers, courteously furnished by Mr. James L. White, I entered upon the composition of this little book, painfully conscious that the *duty* had been too long deferred. Before, however, beginning the task, I examined many histories of Virginia to ascertain what had been written about the Southwest. All the historians were Eastern Virginians, and only brief allusions

had been made to the men and matters of the West, and these often with errors of date and family connections.

It would have been a pleasant task had I been younger, to show the importance of the civil and military services given by the men who drafted the proceedings of "the Freeholders of Fincastle County" in the struggle for independence. The material for that purpose is scanty, and may soon be entirely lost. But perhaps some abler and younger man, following the trail which I have blazed, may perform this duty to the noble dead. Those men, with their contemporaries, truly composed the vanguard of the Revolution.

My Reminiscences illustrate, to some extent, the society of that period of our history to which they refer, and may recall similar incidents, traditions and legends in many families of Virginia.

I am under great obligations to my friend, Professor John Hart, for his judicious and careful editing of my book. He makes clear what was obscure and eliminates repetitions which had been overlooked.

THOMAS LEWIS PRESTON.

*University of Virginia, August, 1899.*

## CHAPTER I.

In April, 1748, a party of pioneers left Waynesborough, in Augusta county, Virginia, to explore the unknown country beyond the Alleghany Mountains. This party\* was organized and led by Colonel James Patton, and consisted of John Buchanan (Patton's son-in-law), Charles Campbell (brother-in-law of Buchanan), Dr. Thomas Walker, and James Wood, of Albemarle county, together with a number of hunters and woodsmen.

Colonel Patton had been a lieutenant in the British navy, and received from George II. a grant of 120,000 acres of land to be located in Virginia west of the Alleghany Mountains. At that period this country was absolutely a *terra incognita*, and, so far as the grantor knew, had never been visited by a white man. This fact, however, did not daunt the adventurous spirit of the gallant seaman. He came with his wife and two daughters to America about 1732, and settled at Spring Hill, near Waynesborough, then an unbroken wilderness. His home was afterwards included in the patent of the "Manor of Beverley," granted on the 6th of September, 1736, by Governor William Gooch, and in the name of George II. by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc.

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\* Waddell's Annals of Augusta County, p. 38. King's Mountain and its Heroes, p. 379.

The patentees were William Beverley, of Essex; Sir John Randolph, of Williamsburg; Richard Randolph, of Henrico, and John Robinson, of King and Queen. The grant was for 118,491 acres "in the county of Orange, between the great mountains and on the river Shenando." On the next day (September 7th) the other grantees released their interests in the patent to Beverley. This patent embraced a large part of the present county of Augusta, south as well as north of Staunton. To perfect the title to his settlement, Patton bought or accepted one from William Beverley for 1,398 acres for five shillings (83½ cents) in 1740.

Colonel Patton was about fifty-eight years old, of a tall and commanding figure and great physical strength and vigor. He was wealthy and well educated, and well fitted for the long and arduous expedition he planned. His party was also well chosen for the same purpose. John Buchanan (his son-in-law) was a surveyor, as was also Charles Campbell, both of whom had the spirit and courage of the early pioneers, with the physical attributes of strength and power of endurance.

Dr. Thomas Walker, born January 15, 1715, was thirty-three years old, and in the prime of manhood. He was richly endowed with every qualification for such an expedition, mentally and physically, and, as physician and surveyor, a great accession to the party. It is fair to assume that he and Colonel Patton were previously well acquainted. Their homes were hardly forty miles apart, and the enterprising and wealthy seaman found a congenial spirit in the daring, restless and intelligent owner

of 15,000 acres of land on the slopes of the Southwest Mountain.

This *first*\* exploring expedition in all probability awakened in Dr. Walker that spirit of adventure that prompted the second in 1750, when he crossed the Cumberland Mountain, east of Cumberland Gap, and struck the head-waters of Kentucky river, not far from and west of the present Whitesburg, and thence went down that river, and, crossing "a divide" to the waters of Big Sandy, proceeded as far as the juncture of the two forks. He named the western fork "Louisa," pronounced by the people of the country *Lewesa*. The rivers mentioned in Dr. Walker's Journal (page 56)—viz., Hunting creek, Miller's river and Frederick's river, are branches of the Kentucky. Dr. Walker also made a third expedition, when he surveyed the tract of land of 6,780 acres in Wolf Hills, for which a patent was granted him from George II., July 14, 1752.

This tract embraced the present site of Abingdon, and ran from the foot of Walker's Mountain on the north to the Knobs on the south. The consideration for this patent was £34. These several expeditions prepared and pointed to Dr. Walker in 1779 as peculiarly fitted to be "chief of the commissioners on the part of Virginia to meet the commissioners from North Carolina in order to run the boundary line between these two Commonwealths."

The well organized and equipped party of Colonel Patton left the vicinity of Waynesborough in April, 1748,

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\* J. H. Hale's Trans-Alleghany Pioneer, p. 250.



and, following the trend of the mountains towards the southwest, as did the buffaloes in their periodical migrations, it passed through the present counties of Rockbridge, Botetourt, Roanoke, Pulaski, Wythe, Smyth and Washington, in Virginia, and Sullivan, Hawkins, Granger and Claiborne, in Tennessee, to Cumberland Gap. "Reaching the summit, where now the three States of Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee meet, we may imagine they pitched their tents near the limpid fountains which send their waters towards the rising and setting sun. They were loyal subjects of the British crown, and when on the morrow they looked over the vast country spread out below them they felt that *there* was a greater domain than that secured to his Majesty by the victory of Cullodon in April, 1746. Patton, grateful for his princely grant, and glowing with enthusiasm for the young imperial general, named the mountain and the river that rises along its western base for the Duke of Cumberland."

No diary of this remarkable expedition has been found, and yet its incipency and details have lingered among the descendants of the Pattons and Campbells to the present day, and have been noted by Joseph A. Waddell in his "Annals of Augusta County," and by Lyman C. Draper in "King's Mountain and Its Heroes" (page 379). The writer knows the fact that Dr. Draper had access to

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NOTE.—Theodore Roosevelt, in his "Winning of the West," gives Dr. Thos. Walker the credit of naming Cumberland Mountain and Cumberland Gap, basing his assertions upon Dr. Walker's diary of his exploration in 1750. His exploration was *two years after* that made by Colonel Patton, whom he accompanied.

and examined the papers of Mrs. Sarah B. Preston, granddaughter of Charles Campbell, and those of Colonel William Preston, the acting executor both of Colonel James Patton and John Buchanan, who died at his house near Amsterdam, Botetourt county, Virginia.

In 1749, John Buchanan, certainly, and, perhaps, Campbell, revisited the country they had explored, for in that year Buchanan located and surveyed a tract of 1,960 acres, called "Sapling Grove," on the 21st of February, 1749. This land was claimed by John Taylor, who assigned it to James Patton, and he assigned it to John Buchanan. Buchanan did not obtain a patent for it, and after his death, the survey was laid before the Court of Appeals by his executors, William Campbell and William Preston, and the court "*certified*" it to be established, and it was then (December 23, 1779,) granted to William Campbell and William Preston, Executors of John Buchanan, by Thomas Jefferson, Governor of Virginia. The executors died before transferring the patent to Buchanan's heirs, and the obligation of discharging this duty fell upon Francis Preston, executor of William Preston, by whom it was performed about 1797 or 1798.

This tract of 1,960 acres was in latter years owned by the Rev. James King, and is that on which the joint cities of Bristol, Tennessee and Virginia, are located.

Charles Campbell, the other surveyor of Colonel James Patton's pioneer expedition, in all probability, accompanied John Buchanan in 1749, and surveyed some of the lands which were patented to him and J. Buchanan in 1753. There is a tradition in the family that on the first surveying expedition there came to the camp of the

party a hunter, who, after partaking of their hospitality, said that he knew their purpose, and if they would survey a tract of land he had chosen, he would show the best lands in all that section of country, for he had hunted over it; and, further, that he was on friendly terms with the Indians, and would insure the party against any attack or molestation by them.

This was agreed to and the survey made, and the patent assured to St. Clair (pronounced Sinkler) in 1753. Some confirmation of this tradition is found in the fact that the date of the patent to St. Clair is the same (1753) as those to Aspinvale and the "Salt Lick" (now the Alkaline Works of Smythe county), patented to Charles Campbell.

St. Clair's "choice," a fine body of land on the South Fork of the Holston, is now known as Sinkler's Bottom. It is well situated, but was the least fertile tract surveyed by those sagacious judges of soils, Charles Campbell and John Buchanan.

In the distribution of the lands under the grant to Colonel Patton, the tradition of the families is, that every alternate survey was for the daughters or sisters of the surveyors.

John Buchanan first settled at Pattonsburg, on the James river, in Botetourt county, and the opposite bank was called Buchanan. A few years afterwards he moved to the tract given to his wife Margaret by her father, Colonel James Patton, and called it "Anchor and Hope." The present "Anchor and Hope Church" near Max Meadows, in Wythe county, is not far from the site of John Buchanan's house.



Mrs. Laetitia Floyd (daughter of Colonel William Preston, and wife of Governor John Floyd), says in her letters to her son that "Colonel Patton came to the extreme western counties of this State (Virginia); he located all the fine lands of Upper James river, Catawba, and the Amsterdam lands in Botetourt county; he then came to North Roanoke, Strouble's creek, embracing the Blacksburg lands and Smithfield, the present seat of Colonel James Patton Preston. After that he came to Burk's Garden and the Rich Valley on the Holstein, in which the celebrated salt-works of Mrs. Sally (Sarah) Preston and Mr. William King are situated." She says that this exploration was after the treaty with the Indians, made at Log Town, somewhere near Pittsburg. In this Mrs. Floyd makes a chronological mistake. The treaty of Log Town was made January 13, 1752, nearly four years after the pioneer exploration. But on the streams and at the places mentioned by Mrs. Floyd surveys were made by Colonel Patton's deputies or agents, John Buchanan and Charles Campbell.

In confirmation of these facts it is or was of record at Orange court-house and Staunton that the lands were held by William Preston's descendants near Amsterdam and Fincastle, in Botetourt; John Buchanan's at Pattonsburg and Anchor and Hope; William Thompson's (who married Colonel Patton's daughter Ann), at Burk's Garden, and on the Holston, where Chilhowie is now situated. This latter tract extending from Walker's Mountain on the north and over the Chestnut Ridge to the south; from the Aspinvale tract on the east to

and including the James Byars tract on the west, must have embraced some 8,000 acres—perhaps more.

Before leaving this subject of the early surveys it may be mentioned that in 1749 the Loyal\* Company was formed by Colonel James Patton, Dr. Thomas Walker, and others, with a grant of 800,000 acres of land to be located north of the North Carolina line and west of the Alleghany Mountains. In that year Colonel Patton and William Ingles visited Burk's Garden and located land there.

This preliminary account of the patents and early explorations beyond the Alleghany Mountains is a necessary preface to the story of the settlement of the country. These explorations opened a new region, fertile, picturesque and healthy, abounding in a great variety of game. Buffalo, elk, deer, bear, turkeys and other smaller birds and beasts frequented the primitive forests and glades, and the streams were full of fine fish. It is not to be wondered at that a current of immigration flowed into this "choicest of lands," and filled up the recesses in the vicinity of the first large surveys.

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\* Trans-Alleghany Pioneer, p. 108.

## CHAPTER II.

The most substantial early settlers on the waters of the Holston were the Scotch-Irish or their descendants. They came not only from Augusta and the Valley of Virginia, but from Pennsylvania and directly from Ireland and Scotland. The frequent murderous incursions of the Indians into Pennsylvania and along the borders of the Ohio turned the tide of immigration more towards the interior, and the large grants to Borden and to Beverley Manor induced many to seek the more secluded and equally eligible lands of the western waters. It may be impossible now to ascertain who were the *first* settlers in the Valley of the Holston. The first name I have found is that of Samuel Stalnaker, whom Dr. Walker mentions in his journal (March 23, 1750). He had met Stalnaker in April, 1748, between the Reedy Creek settlements and Holston river, on his way to trade with the Cherokee Indians.

In 1750, Stalnaker had settled on the Holston about nine miles below "Davis' Bottom," and Dr. Walker and Mr. Powell helped him to build his cabin. The location of this, the first cabin on the waters of the Holston, cannot now be ascertained.

The next name mentioned is that of Taylor, who had

settled at Sapling Grove (now Bristol), and from whom Colonel Patton bought the settler's right and gave the tract to his son-in-law, John Buchanan, to whose heirs the patent for 1,960 acres was issued, as heretofore stated.

Next comes St. Clair, the hunter, to whom was patented Sinkler's Bottom in 1753. Not long afterwards came the Dungans, who squatted on a part of the Aspinvale tract, and afterwards entered land near the foot of Walker's Mountain. Soon other settlers poured in and took up land further west. On the South Fork were the Scotts, Thomases and Grahams; on the Middle Fork the Edmondsons, Berrys, Dentons, and many others. On the North Fork, near the Salt-works, were the Scotts, Lyons, Crabtrees, Talbots, Henegars and others. In short, the tide of immigration was directed to this interior and fertile country by Colonel Patton, Dr. Thomas Walker and others of the Loyal Company, and by the fact that the settlements on the waters of the Ohio from Pennsylvania and the Valley of Virginia westward were made unsafe by the hostility of the Indians, who in times of peace were troublesome, and whose plundering incursions often terminated in pitiless massacres. These influences combined to fill rapidly the Valley of the Holston, so that in twenty years from the date of the earliest patents, and less than thirty years after the first pioneer exploration (1748) there was a well-organized and established community of intelligent and God-fearing people. No better evidence of this fact need be adduced than that in January, 1773, there were one hundred and thirty-eight (138) signatures to "a call from the

united congregations of Ebbing and Sinking Springs on Holston's river, Fincastle county, to be presented to the Rev. Charles Cummings, minister of the Gospel at the Rev. Presbytery of Hanover, then sitting at the Tinkling Spring."

Sinking Spring is not a mile northwest of Abingdon, at the eastern base of Academy Hill. The Ebbing Spring is about twelve miles east of Abingdon, on the Middle Fork of Holston, and Tinkling Spring, where the Presbytery sat, is in Augusta county, about three miles west of Fishersville.

The full list of the 138 signatures to this call was given by Governor David Campbell, November 12, 1851, to the Rev. William Henry Foote, and is found on pages 116 and 117 of his "Sketches of Virginia" (second series). These names are so familiar to many of the citizens of Washington county that the list is copied in full:

William Lester,  
William Page,  
Samuel Buchanan, Jr.,  
Thomas Montgomery,  
Samuel Bell,  
John Campbell,  
Richard Moore,  
Thomas Ramsey,  
Samuel Wilson,  
Joseph Vance,  
William Young,  
William Davidson,  
James Young,

James Piper,  
James Harrold,  
Samuel Newell,  
David Wilson,  
David Craig,  
Robert Gamble,  
Andrew Martin,  
Augustus Webb,  
Samuel Brigg,  
Wesley White,  
James Dorchester,  
James Fulkerson,  
Stephen Jordan,



John Sharp,	Alex. Laughlin,
John Long,	James English,
Robert Topp,	John Robinson,
John Hunt,	James Kincannon,
Thomas Bailey,	Margaret Edmiston,
David Gattgood,	John Edmiston,
Alexander Breckinridge,	John Boyd,
George Clark,	Robert Kirkham,
James Molden,	Martin Pruitt,
William Blanton,	Nicholas Brobston,
Chris'r Acklin,	Andrew Miller,
James Craig,	Alexander McNutt,
Joseph Gamble,	William Pruitt,
John McNabb,	John McCutchen,
Chris'r Funkhouser,	James Berry,
John Funkhouser,	James Trimble,
John Funkhouser, Jr.,	William Berry,
John Sharp,	Moses Buchanan,
John Berry,	David Carson,
James Montgomery,	Samuel Buchanan,
Samuel Huston,	William Bates,
Henry Cresswell,	William McMillin,
George Adams,	John Kennedy,
George Buchanan,	Robert Lamb,
James Dysart,	Thomas Rafferty,
William Miller,	Thomas Baker,
Andrew Leeper,	John Groce,
David Snodgrass,	Robert Buchanan,
Dan'l McCormick,	Thomas Evans,
Francis Kincannon,	William Marlor,
Joseph Snodgrass,	William Edmiston,

James Thompson,	Thomas Edmiston,
Robert Deniston,	John Beaty,
William Edmiston,	David Beaty,
Sam'l Edmiston,	George Feator,
Andrew Kincannon,	Mich'l Halyacre,
John Kelley,	Stephen Cawood,
George Blackburn,	James Garvill,
William Blackburn,	Robert Buchanan, Jr.,
James Vance,	Edward Jamison,
John Casey,	Richard Higgons,
Benjamin Logan,	John Lester,
Robert Edmondson,	Hugh Johnson,
Thomas Berry,	Edward Pharis,
Robert Trimble,	Joseph Lester,
William McGaughey,	Sam'l White,
David Drydon,	George Blackburn,
William McNabb,	Arthur Blackburn,
John Davis,	Wm. Blackburn,
Halbert McClure,	Joseph Black,
Arthur Blackburn,	Joseph Craig,
Nath'l Davis.	Robert Craig,
Sam'l Evans,	John Dover,
William Kennedy,	Nathaniel Davis,
Andrew McFarren,	Geo. Clark,
Sam'l Hendry,	John Campbell,
John Patterson,	Jas. Gilmore,
James Gilmore,	John Lowrey,
John Lowrey,	Geo. Feator (Flenor?)
William Christian,	Jas. Dysart,
Andrew Colvill,	John Kelley,
Robert Craig,	Jas. Piper,

Joseph Black,  
Jonathan Douglass,  
William Berry,  
John Cusick,

Stephen Cawood,  
John Lester,  
James Lester,  
Wm. Lester.

The Ebbing Spring, I am sorry to hear, has ceased "to ebb and flow." When I last visited it it ebbed and flowed at intervals of about two or three hours. In its normal condition it is a bold, beautiful stream, flowing from among limestone rocks. Before the water begins to flow there is a gurgling sound, and then the stream gushes out with a rapid current, filling the channel. The ebb begins gradually and in less than half an hour the spring is as limpid and quiet as it was before the disturbance.

It will be observed that the "Call" is dated "Fincastle county." At that time this county embraced all that country belonging to Virginia west of Montgomery county, and was supposed to extend to the Ohio on the north and the Mississippi on the west. It had a short existence, as it was established in 1772, and abolished in 1776, "when the territory covered by it was divided into three new counties—viz., Montgomery, Washington, and Kentucky. It was called 'Fincastle' from the seat of Lord Botetourt, in England, *Fin Castle*." The county seat of this county was at "Fort Chiswell," now in Wythe county, and the seat of the McGavock family. The fort was built by the State in 1758 under the direction and superintendence of the third Colonel William Byrd, and named by him after his friend, Colonel John Chiswell, the owner and operator of the "New River



Lead Mines" (then but recently discovered by him), a few miles distant.

Fort Chiswell has other claims to historical association. It was the meeting place, in all probability, of that band of "West Augusta" patriots who were the first to resolve "to resist the aggressions of England by force." The author of those celebrated "Fincastle Resolutions" is not authentically ascertained. They may have been written by the Rev. Charles Cummings, or by Colonel William Preston, or William Christian, or Arthur or William Campbell, or by some other of the many who signed them. The only names given by Lyman C. Draper in "King's Mountain and Its Heroes" are Colonels William Preston, William Christian, Arthur and William Campbell, and William Edmondson, Rev. Charles Cummings and other leaders of Fincastle county, comprising the Holston settlements. They are dated January 20, 1775, *three months before* the battle of Lexington; *four, before* the "patriotic resolves" of the people of Mecklenburg, North Carolina; *five, before* the battle of Bunker's Hill, and nearly a year and five months before the Declaration of Independence.

These resolutions were sent to General Washington, then a member of the convention in Philadelphia. He knew, personally, several of the signers, and was a friend and correspondent of Colonel William Preston. With this knowledge of the leaders and the people of the county they represented, he felt warranted in saying, "Strip me of the dejected and suffering remnant of my army; take from me all that I have left; leave me but a banner; give me but the means to plant it upon the

mountains of West Augusta,\* and I will yet draw around me the men who will lift up their bleeding country from the dust and set her free."

The report of the committee appointed to draft the proceedings to the meeting of "the Freeholders of Fincastle county," and "the Holston settlement" is so replete with interest and reflects so accurately the feelings of the intelligent citizens of Virginia at that period, that I give in full the text of the copy so kindly furnished me by R. A. Brock, former secretary of the Historical Society of Virginia, and present secretary of the Southern Historical Society. The men who composed that committee were representative men, and a more intelligent and patriotic group could not be found in any section of the "Old Dominion." Their names are "household words" in Southwest Virginia. For their services in the Revolutionary War as citizens and soldiers each one deserves a separate biography and a monument of marble. Well may their descendants be proud of such ancestors.

#### AMERICAN ARCHIVES.

##### FINCASTLE COUNTY (VIRGINIA) MEETING.

In obedience to the resolves of the Continental Congress, a meeting of the Freeholders of Fincastle county, in Virginia, was held on the 20th day of January, 1775,

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\* Some of Augusta County's favorite orators have quoted this passage from Gov. McDowell's speech as applying to that county *exclusively*, but it is fair to presume that it had *primarily* reference to the signers of the Fincastle Resolutions as well as to his friends, the Lewises and others of Augusta County.

who, after approving of the association framed by that august body in behalf of all the Colonies, and subscribing thereto, proceeded to the election of a committee to see the same carried punctually into execution, when the following gentlemen were nominated: The Rev. Charles Cummings, Colonel William Preston, Colonel William Christian, Captain Stephen Trigg, Major Arthur Campbell, Major William Inglis, Captain Walter Crockett, Captain John Montgomery, Captain James McGavock, Captain William Campbell, Captain Thomas Madison, Captain Daniel Smith, Captain William Russell, Captain Evan Shelby, and Lieutenant William Edmondson. After the election the committee made choice of Colonel William Christian for their chairman, and appointed Mr. David Campbell to be clerk.

The following address was then unanimously agreed to by the people of the county, and is as follows:

To the Honorable PEYTON RANDOLPH, Esquire, RICHARD HENRY LEE, GEORGE WASHINGTON, PATRICK HENRY, *Junior*, RICHARD BLAND, BENJAMIN HARRISON, and EDMUND PENDLETON, Esquires, the Delegates from this Colony who attended the Continental Congress held in Philadelphia:

Gentlemen,—Had it not been for our remote situation and the Indian war which we were lately engaged in,\* to chastise those cruel and savage people for the many murders and depredations they have committed among

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\* Called Dunmore's War, and ended by the battle at Point Pleasant, October 10, 1774.

us, now happily terminated under the auspices of our present worthy Governor, his excellency the Right Honorable the Earl of Dunmore, we should before this time have made known to you our thankfulness for the very important services you have rendered to your country, in conjunction with the worthy delegates from the other provinces.

Your noble efforts for reconciling the Mother Country and the Colonies on rational and constitutional principles, and your pacific, steady and uniform conduct in all that arduous work entitle you to the esteem of all British America, and will immortalize you in the annals of your country. We heartily concur in your resolutions,\* and shall in every instance strictly and invariably adhere thereto.

We assure you, gentlemen, and all our countrymen, that we are a people whose hearts overflow with love and duty to our lawful sovereign, George Third, whose illustrious house for several successive reigns have been the guardians of the civil and religious rights and liberties of British subjects as settled at the glorious Revolution; that we are willing to risk our lives in the service of his Majesty for the support of the Protestant religion and the rights and liberties of his subjects as they have been established by Compact, Law and Ancient Charter. We are heartily grieved at the differences which now subsist between the parent State and the Colonies, and most ardently wish to see harmony restored on an equit-

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\* These resolutions were passed on the 14th October, 1774. Hinton's United States, pp. 232-3-4.

able basis, and by the most lenient measures that can be devised by the heart of man. Many of us and our forefathers left our native land, considering it a kingdom subjected to inordinate power, and greatly abridged of its liberties; we crossed the *Atlantic*, and explored this uncultivated wilderness, bordering on many nations of savages, and surrounded by mountains almost inaccessible to any but those very savages, who have incessantly been committing barbarities and depredations on us since our first seating this country. The fatigues and dangers we patiently encountered supported by the pleasing hope of enjoying those rights and liberties which had been granted to *Virginians*, and were denied us in our native country, and of transmitting them inviolate to our posterity; but soon to these remote regions the hand of unlimited and unconstitutional power hath pursued us, to strip us of that liberty and property with which God, nature, and the rights of humanity have vested us. We are ready and willing to contribute all in our power for the support of his Majesty's Government, if applied to constitutionally, and when the grants are made by our own representatives, but cannot think of submitting our liberty or property to the power of a venal British Parliament, or the will of a corrupt ministry.

We by no means desire to shake off our duty or our allegiance to our lawful sovereign, but, on the contrary, shall ever glory in being the loyal subjects of a Protestant Prince, descended from such illustrious progenitors as long as we can enjoy the free exercise of our Religion



as Protestants, and our Liberties and Properties as *British* subjects.

But if no pacific measures shall be proposed or adopted by Great Britain, and our enemies shall attempt to dragoon us out of these inestimable privileges which we are entitled to as subjects, and to reduce us to a state of slavery, we declare that we are deliberately and resolutely determined never to surrender them to any power upon earth, but at the expense of our lives.

These are our real, though unpolished, sentiments of liberty and loyalty, and in them we are resolved to live and die.

We are, gentlemen, with the most perfect esteem and regard, your most obedient servants.

COPY VERBATIM ET LITERATIM.

*By Dr. R. A. Brock.*

RICHMOND, VA., *April 30, 1898.*

The spirit of freeman in Virginia was not of recent nor of ephemeral growth. Nearly ten years before the date of this meeting of "the Freeholders of Fincastle county, Virginia," says Mr. George Bancroft, "received the plan to tax America by Parliament with consternation."

"Patrick Henry, then, for the first time, a member of "the Legislature, 'saw the time for the enforcement of "the stamp tax drawing near, while all the other colonies, through timid hesitation, or the want of oppor-

“tunity, still remained silent, and cautious loyalty  
“hushed the experienced statesmen of his own,’ made  
“that celebrated speech in which he said, ‘Tarquin and  
“Caesar had each his Brutus; Charles the First his Crom-  
“well, and George the Third’—. ‘Treason,’ shouted  
“the Speaker, ‘Treason, treason,’ was echoed round the  
“house, while Henry, fixing his eye on the first inter-  
“rupter, continued without faltering, ‘may profit by  
“their example.’”

On the same day of this meeting, the Parliament of England was discussing the right of taxing the American Colonies, when Lord Chatham delivered that eloquent speech in defence of the Colonies which endeared him to every American. In it he declared, “But his Majesty is advised that the union in America cannot last. I pronounce it a union, solid, permanent and effectual. Its real stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land; in their simplicity of life is found the integrity and courage of freedom. These true sons of the earth are invincible.” The spirit of the patriots of Fort Chiswell was inspiring the mind and heart of the British orator and statesman.

In Mr. Bancroft’s account of this meeting of Freeholders, he says it was near Abingdon. A distance of more than sixty miles separates the localities.

The Congress proceeded with great deliberation; its debates were held with closed doors, and the honor of each member was solemnly engaged not to disclose any of the discussions till such disclosure was declared advisable by the majority. It was not till the 14th of

October that the following series of resolutions, which may be regarded as their grand declaration of rights and grievances, was passed and promulgated. To abridge or analyze them would be an injustice to the memory of their authors, and to the fidelity of history. We therefore present them entire:

*“Resolved*, unanimously, That the inhabitants of the English Colonies in North America, by the immutable laws of nature, the principles of the English Constitution, and the several charters or compacts, have the following rights:

“1. That they are entitled to life, liberty and property; and they have never ceded to any foreign power whatever a right to dispose of either without their consent.

“2. That our ancestors who first settled these Colonies were, at the time of their emigration from the Mother Country, entitled to all the rights, liberties, and immunities of free and natural-born subjects within the realm of England.

“3. That by such emigration they by no means forfeited, surrendered, or lost any of those rights, but that they were, and their descendants now are, entitled to the exercise and enjoyment of all such of them as their local and other circumstances enable them to exercise and enjoy.

“4. That the foundation of English liberty, and of all free governments, is a right in the people to participate in their legislative council, and as the English colonists are not represented, and, from their local and other circumstances, cannot properly be represented, in the



British Parliament, they are entitled to a free and exclusive power of legislation in their several provincial legislatures, where their right of representation can alone be preserved, in all cases of taxation and internal policy, subject only to the negative of their sovereign, in such manner as has been heretofore used and accustomed. But from the necessity of the case, and a regard to the mutual interest of both countries, we cheerfully consent to the operation of such acts of the British Parliament as are, *bona fide*, restrained to the regulation of our external commerce, for the purpose of securing the commercial advantages of the whole empire to the Mother Country, and the commercial benefit of its representative members; excluding every idea of taxation, internal or external, for raising a revenue on the subjects in America, without their consent.

“5. That the respective Colonies are entitled to the common law of England, and, more especially, to the great and inestimable privilege of being tried by their peers of the vicinity, according to the course of law.

“6. That they are entitled to the benefit of such of the English statutes as existed at the time of their colonization, and which they have, by experience, respectively found to be applicable to their several local and other circumstances.

“7. That these, his Majesty's Colonies, are likewise entitled to all the immunities and privileges granted and confirmed to them by royal charters, or secured by their several codes of provincial laws.

“8. That they have a right peaceably to assemble, consider of their grievances, and petition the King; and

that all prosecutions, prohibitory proclamations and commitments for the same are illegal.

“9. That the keeping a standing army in these Colonies in times of peace, without the consent of the Legislature of that Colony in which such army is kept, is against law.

“10. It is indispensable to good government, and rendered essential by the English Constitution, that the constituent branches of the Legislature be independent of each other; that, therefore, the exercise of legislative power in several Colonies, by a council appointed during pleasure by the Crown, is unconstitutional, dangerous and destructive to the freedom of American legislation.

“All and each of which the aforesaid deputies, in behalf of themselves and their constituents, do claim, demand, and insist on as their indubitable rights and liberties, which cannot be legally taken from them, altered or abridged by any power whatever, without their consent, by their representatives in their several provincial legislatures.”

“In the course of our inquiry,” they proceed to say, “we find many infringements and violations of the foregoing rights, which, from an ardent desire that harmony and mutual intercourse of affection and interest may be restored, we pass over for the present, and proceed to state such acts and measures as have been adopted since the last war, which demonstrate a system formed to enslave America.”

In their address to the people of Great Britain, after enumerating the several acts of Parliament deemed to be violations of their rights, they appeal for relief to the generosity, to the virtue, and to the justice of the nation.

“You have been told,” they say, “that we are seditious, impatient of government, and desirous of independency. Be assured that these are not facts, but calumnies. Permit us to be as free as yourselves, and we shall ever esteem a union with you to be our greatest glory and our greatest happiness; we shall ever be ready to contribute all in our power to the welfare of the whole empire; we shall consider your enemies as our enemies, and your interest as our own. But if you are determined that your ministers shall wantonly sport with the rights of mankind; if neither the voice of justice, the dictates of the law, the principles of the constitution, or the suggestions of humanity, can restrain your hands from shedding human blood in such an impious cause, we must then tell you that we will never submit to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for any ministry or nation in the world.”

\* \* \* \* \*

It was said above that William Preston was a friend and correspondent of General Washington. As illustrating this fact I venture to give an extract from Mrs. Miller's Memoirs of Governor McDowell. Speaking of her great-grandfather, William Preston, she says, “While pursuing his business as surveyor he fell in with a young man from Eastern Virginia, carrying his ball and chain, being engaged in the same craft as himself. The acquaintance between them was promoted by Preston's hospitable entertainment of his friend at his own house.”

Indians yet prowled around in that mountain region. They were not foes, however, but friends to the family

on the bleak knob of the Alleghanies, especially to the genial, warm-hearted, sandy-haired young man who was the head of it. They felt very differently to the dark stranger who came to visit him, and, after a while, determined to destroy him. Seizing an occasion when the gentlemen, unconscious of danger, sat chatting on the green turf, an Indian raised his bow and took aim at the unwelcome visitor. But before he loosed the arrow, Preston, in the eagerness of his talk, flung himself forward so as completely to shelter his friend. The savage drew back and dropped his bow. He would not risk an injury to Preston for the gratification of a hatred, however intense. And it was many a long day, doubtless, before either the host or his guest knew the peril which had threatened.

This "dark stranger" was George Washington. The friendship of the young surveyors brought about a correspondence between them that lasted as long as Preston lived. Long after the Indians had disappeared from the scene the young son of the sandy-haired Preston met his father's friend in Philadelphia, the one President of the United States, the other representing in Congress the Virginia they both loved. Warm relations were established between the old and the young man, and in remembrance of the old friendship the horn of a buffalo was produced as a trophy to Colonel Preston's skill in a hunt they had had in the Alleghanies. The horn was put into the hands of a clever silversmith in Philadelphia, who constructed out of it a small ladle, the handle of which was finished with a silver cap, and the bottom filled in with a silver plate. On the inside of the plate

Washington had his head engraved, while young, Preston covered the outside with Masonic emblems. This unique little affair was much prized in the family, but the owners of it, in a spirit of patriotic pride, lent it, in 1876, to the Centennial Exposition, and it was never heard of more.

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## CHAPTER III.

From this long digression we turn to the less exciting and more prosaic account of the early settling of the country.

In 1766, Arthur Campbell with his wife Margaret (daughter of Charles and sister of General William Campbell), settled at "Royal Oak," a mile east of Marion. This was one of the tracts of land embraced in the Patton grant, and assigned by Charles Campbell to his daughter Margaret. Few now know much of Arthur Campbell, and yet he was one of the most remarkable, influential and talented men of the period. A brief sketch of his life is given in Howe's History of Virginia (page 503), prefaced by these sentences:

"The annexed biographical sketches of Colonel Arthur Campbell and General William Campbell are from the MS. history of Washington county. The notice of the latter was written by the former, who was both a cousin and brother-in-law." This MS. memoir or history, as Howe states, and as is known to many now living, was written by Colonel John Campbell, Treasurer of the United States in the administration of President Jackson, and brother of Governor David Campbell. It was stolen from the clerk's office of Washington county,



where it was kept by his nephew, James C. Campbell, and has never been recovered. The loss is lamentable and irreparable.

As Howe's History is out of print, and in possession of but few of the present generation, his sketch of Arthur Campbell will be added as an appendix to this sketch, with such other facts and incidents as may be illustrative of his character and career. It may be noted here that he was born in Augusta county, 1742, and, at the time when he settled at Royal Oak, in 1766, was only twenty-four years old. General William Campbell was also a native of Augusta county, and was born in 1745. Soon after the death of his father (Charles Campbell), in 1767, he, then about twenty-three years old, removed to Aspinvale, with his mother and four sisters, and built a double log cabin, which was his home until his death. Aspinvale is eight miles west of Marion, Smythe county, and one mile west of the Seven-Mile Ford, and is now owned by Charles Henry Campbell Preston, the great-grandson of General William Campbell. William Campbell inherited this beautiful estate from his mother and the "Salt Lick" from his father, who was one of Colonel Patton's exploring expedition in 1748, as previously mentioned. The patents for these lands were granted by Lord Dinwiddie in the name of George II., October 23, 1753. As they are somewhat curious and of historical interest, a copy of that for the "Salt Lick," of 330 acres, is here inserted:

"George the Second by the grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the faith, etc.



“ To all to whom these presents shall come, greeting.  
“ Know Ye that for divers good causes and Considera-  
“ tions but more especially for and in Consideration of  
“ the sum of thirty-five shillings of good and lawful  
“ money for our use paid to our Receiver General of our  
“ Revenues in this our Colony and Dominion of Virginia,  
“ we have given, granted and confirmed, and by these  
“ presents for us, our heirs and successors, Do give, grant  
“ and confirm unto Charles Campbell one certain tract  
“ or parcel of land containing three hundred and thirty  
“ acres, lying and being in the county of Augusta on the  
“ North fork of the Indian river, a branch of Mississippi,  
“ and bounded as followeth to wit: Beginning—at a  
“ double Beech tree and running thence North twenty  
“ Degrees West one hundred and seventy six Poles to a  
“ Beech under a High Knob of a hill; thence North sixty  
“ Degrees, East Eighty Poles to a white Oak; thence  
“ North thirty four Degrees West Eighty Poles to a white  
“ Oak on the south East side of the hill; thence South  
“ sixty one Degrees, West Eighty poles between two  
“ Buckeye saplins by a brook; thence South thirty nine  
“ Degrees West one hundred and thirty four poles to two  
“ Hiccorys; thence South seventy five Degrees West  
“ Eighty six poles to a hiccory and Lynn tree; thence  
“ South one Degree west forty poles to a Hiccory and a  
“ white Oak; thence South sixty three Degrees West  
“ ninety Poles to a Lynn tree; thence South one Degree,  
“ West Seventy two Poles to a sugar tree and a Buck Eye;  
“ thence North Eighty five Degrees East three hundred  
“ and thirty five poles to the Beginning, with all Woods,  
“ Underwoods, Swamps, Marshes, low Grounds, Meadows,

“Feedings, and his due share of all Venis Mories and  
“quarries as well Discovered or not discovered within  
“the bounds aforesaid and being part of said quantity  
“of three Hundred and thirty Acres of Land, and the  
“rivers Waters and Water Courses therein Contained  
“together with the Priviledges of Hunting, Hawking,  
“Fishing, Fowling and all other Profits, Commodities  
“and Heriditaments whatsoever to the same or any Part  
“thereof belonging or in any wise Appertaining TO  
“HAVE, HOLD, POSSESS and enjoy the said tract or  
“Parcel of Land and all other the granted premises and  
“every part thereof with their and every of their Appur-  
“tenances unto the said Charles Campbell and to his  
“heirs and assigns forever to the only use and behoof of  
“him the said his heirs and assigns forever to be held  
“of us our heirs and successors as of our Manor of East  
“Greenwich in the County of Kent in free and common  
“soccage and not in Capite or by Knights Service yield-  
“ing and paying unto us our heirs and successors for  
“every fifty Acres of Land and so Proportionately for a  
“lesser or greater quantity than fifty acres the free rent  
“of one shilling yearly to be paid upon the feast of St.  
“Michael the Arch Angel and also the Cultivating and  
“Improving three Acres part of every fifty of the tract  
“above mentioned within three years after the date of  
“these presents; PROVIDED always that if three years of  
“the said free rent shall at any time be in Arrear and  
“unpaid or if the said Charles Campbell his heirs or  
“Assigns do not within the space of three years next  
“coming after the date of these presents cultivate and  
“Improve three Acres part of every fifty of the tract

“above mentioned then the Estate hereby granted shall  
“Cease and be utterly Determined and hereafter it  
“shall and may be lawful to and for us our heirs and  
“successors to grant the same Land and premises with  
“the Appurtenances unto such other person or persons  
“as we our heirs and successors shall think fit.

“IN WITNESS whereof we have caused our Letters  
“Patent to be made. WITNESS our trusty and well beloved  
“Robert Dinwiddie Esqr., our Lieutenant Governor and  
“Commander in Chief of our said Colony and Dominion  
“at Williamsburg under the seal of our said Colony XX  
“(20) day of August one thousand seven hundred and  
“fifty three in the twenty seventh year of our Reign.”

“ROBERT DINWIDDIE.”

Elizabeth, the eldest of William Campbell's sisters, married John Taylor; the second, Jane, Thomas Tate; the third, Margaret, Colonel Arthur Campbell, and the fourth, Ann, Richard Postan. To each of these was assigned those fertile and beautiful tracts of land in the Rich Valley on the waters of the North Fork of Holston river, and their descendants occupy portions of the land to this day. These various tracts were parts of the James Patton grants and were entered and surveyed by Charles Campbell not long after the pioneer expedition of 1748—perhaps in 1749 or 1750. As Charles Campbell and John Buchanan were associated in these surveys, it seems probable that they were made contemporaneously with the survey of Sapling Grove (now Bristol, Virginia-Tennessee), by John Buchanan in 1749.

These were *the earliest surveys* made upon the waters of Holston river.

When the Salt Lick was patented to Charles Campbell (1753) more than one-third of the area was covered by water, and another third was a morass extending up to a point opposite the old plaster bank. The margin of the pond or "lake," as it was called, was fringed with tall grass, bulrushes and cat-tails, and furnished a screen to hunters who could by this means get within gun-shot of the water-fowl which periodically visited in great numbers this sequestered and attractive inland lake. James Crabtree, the son of the original owner of land adjoining the Salt Lake on the east, told the writer that when he was a boy his mother promised him a pint of cream for every swan he killed, and that he rarely failed to get his cream every day.

Wild geese, in their migrations north in spring and south in autumn, made this a favorite resting place, and wild ducks of several varieties passed a large part of the year on this "Lake of the Woods," the water of which did not freeze as early nor as solidly as that of the fresh-water ponds and streams of the adjacent regions.

As late as 1847-'48 large flocks of teal and mallards visited the valley and furnished good sport to the hunters and a savory, appetizing dish for the table. Woodcock were also abundant, and here they reared their young. Sora were also frequently found about marshy spots and ditch-banks.

That it was a favorite resort of the buffalo, elk and deer was natural, as the instinct of these animals leads them unerringly to saline deposits, and rich pasture

lands. In this valley both were found in abundance, and in the most attractive form, and of the best quality. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that the Aborigines of the country pitched their tents and erected their wigwams near that mysterious lake. In 1846 or 1847, when the field south of the road leading from the valley to Cedar branch was ploughed, the lines of former buildings could be distinctly traced by the ashes and piles of periwinkle shells and fragments of pottery, which were turned up. These were scattered along two parallel lines about fifty or sixty feet apart. One explanation of the presence of the periwinkle shells is that they formed a sort of medium of exchange or money among the tribes who frequented this section of country. A similar deposit of these small shells is found on Mr. Benjamin Buchanan's place near Caywoods (pronounced Keywood) Gap, but there is no trace of former dwellings there. A more natural supposition is that these crustacea were used for food, being boiled with meat or herbs. There is strong presumptive evidence that the Indians made salt here by boiling the water that flowed from salt springs which rose to the surface at the eastern margin of the valley, and on the margin of the creek between the Cedar-Creek road and the river. The writer well remembers two of these springs. One was at the base of the tall knob that commands the valley on the east, near a large walnut tree which stood on the margin of the plain; the other issued from a crevice in the limestone rock and flowed over a smooth surface to the creek. Along the margin of the latter salt was formed in clear, bright crystals during the warm days of the summer months.



Originally the slopes of the hills inclosing the valley were covered by a magnificent forest of oak, poplar, lynn, sugar-tree, walnut and elms. The imagination can scarcely conceive of a more beautiful scene than was presented to the eye when the rich foliage of this forest was touched by the frost and reflected in the tranquil waters of the lake. The colors of the rainbow seemed settled upon the earth, and the varied hues of the flower garden were scattered among and rested upon the leaves of forest trees. In the gloom of a damp twilight and during the "wee" hours of the night "the Jack o'lantern" or "Will o' the Wisp" could be seen flitting along the shore of the pond, in and out of the tall weeds and bushes, and, from the resemblance to a lantern swung by human hands, might lure a benighted and bewildered traveler from his path into the morass that gave it birth.

Neither limner's brush nor poet's pen can convey an adequate idea of the varied beauties of this peculiar valley. It must be seen to be appreciated. Its outline is like the longitudinal section of a pear, and the phases of its beauty change at every point of view.

From the old Preston house the level foreground extends to the "Madam Russell House," a distance of nearly three quarters of a mile. At this point the graceful waving line of the oval-shaped hills which border the valley on the north begins. Beyond these and higher is Little Bushy Mountain, crowned with its forest of pine. Beyond this towers Clinch Mountain in its forest mantle (azure tinted by distance) to the highest point of its range crowned by the White Rocks, which look like the walls of a giant castle, placed to command a view of a



wide domain spread out below. Next in altitude are the Red Rocks, the flanking buttress as it were, of the White Castle. They curve in the segment of a circle, and, as the name implies, have caught the hues of an autumnal sunset. At any period of a clear day at sunrise when the White Rocks catch the earliest rays; or at midday, when the plain is bathed in light; or at eventide, when the lengthening shadows steal softly across the scene, and the White Rocks glow in the red rays of the setting sun, the landscape is of surpassing beauty. And at night, when the moon is full, and, rising behind the sharper peaks on the east, throws their shadows upon the valley, the scene is one to dream of, so soft, so quiet, so full of that rapture of repose that falls like dew upon the soul after the bustle and struggles of the day are done.

From the promontory-like eminence, near the center of the eastern border of the plain is another but different landscape. Looking west is like looking through a reversed telescope. The valley gradually rises and narrows to Buena Vista, a mile and a half distant; the hills diminish in height and size; and the forest-clad hills beyond bound the horizon. To the left is the old Preston house, at one period made picturesque by the tall Lombardy poplars, and the weeping and golden willows that stood in front, at the sides and in the rear of the buildings; and the "Sugar Loaf," like a pyramid, rising 350 feet from the plain, and the old mill, with its wheel of 20-feet diameter turned by the water from the spring that rises in the gorge between the Sugar Loaf and the adjoining hill, at the base of which is a cliff.

On the summit of this rough and lofty hill eagles built

their nests from the earliest settlement of the valley until about 1850, and added to the fascination of the place by their graceful soaring as they rose higher and higher into the clear atmosphere. But they, with the trees, the mill-wheel, and many other accessories of the past, have disappeared.

From the western end of the valley the picture is reversed, and at Buena Vista all of the valley (except the Preston house and its surroundings) is spread like a map before you. The old salt furnaces and houses built from the time of William King (in 1800) to 1865 are only some 600 yards distant, and add life to the scene. The horizon to the east is varied by the highest ridge and knob bounding the valley.

“But see what a change is wrought by the civilizing  
“Caucasian! The mighty battlements of white and red  
“sandstone crowning the lofty Clinch Mountains, alone  
“have defied his handiwork. Let us suppose the mam-  
“moth skeleton found in the cave overlooking this lovely  
“valley was rehabilitated and did ascend in the flesh  
“again from his dark and stony resting place to gaze  
“upon his home of the past. His great black eyes would  
“dilate and flash in human wonder—nothing except  
“those mountain cliffs seem familiar. Where was once  
“the crystal lake cushioned in lofty forest is now a level  
“meadow of waving grass, intersected here and there by  
“geometric macadamized roads and well trimmed  
“hedges. Where once he glided swiftly in bark canoe  
“and whizzed his arrows at clattering wild geese, now is  
“hard, solid ground, and the cry of the water-fowl is  
“heard no more. Where once the giant forest skirted

“ the lake, and where, grouping here and there through  
“ the sylvan openings, were seen the wigwams of his  
“ tribe, now, amidst long rows of modern cottages, hum-  
“ ming factories with great chimneys belching forth  
“ dense masses of inky smoke, and glistening in the morn-  
“ ing sun, he sees a glittering golden cross—emblem of a  
“ new race and a new faith. But was not their God his  
“ God? The ‘Great Manitou,’ the ‘Great Spirit,’ of  
“ the Indians embodies the same ideal of love and power.  
“ Suddenly this mighty warrior of other days starts  
“ and shivers in abject terror. A shriek so deep, so pow-  
“ erful, so all-pervading, fills the valley, echoing back  
“ from hill to hill, that the very White Rocks give out a  
“ faint response. His untutored mind could conceive of  
“ naught save the mighty voice of the clouds to equal it.  
“ His gaze is westward, and, rushing from it, as it seemed  
“ to him from beneath the earth, there comes a monster  
“ serpent. Breathing fire and smoke, it glides along its  
“ checkered path with tremendous speed, stopping sud-  
“ denly, grim and panting, at the eastern end of the  
“ valley. Lo! the poor Indian. Dire distress is written  
“ upon his brow. He feels and knows that all of his wild  
“ kin of the woods and the buffalo, elk and bear have been  
“ since fled before this awful monster; that this beautiful  
“ valley is no more held for him and his people by the  
“ Great Spirit, and that there can never be any joy for  
“ him again upon earth. He casts one yearning, heart-  
“ broken glance over his ancient domains, and, waving  
“ them an eternal farewell, descends once more into his  
“ sombre rest.”\*

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\* Kindly contributed by Captain Frank S. Robertson.

What it was like at that prehistoric period, when the mastodon wandered through its morasses (if morasses they were) and fed upon its foliage, can never be known. But at whatever period the mastodons came, or whence they came, or how they were destroyed, they did come and left as evidence of their presence their mouldering bones, buried a few feet beneath the earth's surface during all these centuries.

Well may man's imagination be troubled by such revelation of the power of God. The first discovery of these mastodon relics was made when a well was dug by General Francis Preston, about 1797 or 1798, in front of the Preston house, now occupied by Mr. George W. Palmer. They were only a few of the jaw teeth and other bones that soon crumbled after being exposed to the air. They were, however, enough for a practical joke played upon Bishop Madison (then president of William and Mary College) by William Preston (brother of Francis) and a former pupil of the Bishop's. He gave a glowing description of the discovery and sent to the Bishop a box of the peat-like soil, which he said was taken from the stomach of the exhumed monster, and asked that it be analyzed to ascertain on what food the animal fed, and to what genus or species it belonged. The Bishop, knowing his correspondent, detected the hoax, but replied that if the substance sent was from the stomach of the extinct animal, it was "of the herbivorous species."

Since then many other specimens of teeth and bones have been dug up. When the ditch was dug in 1847 and 1848 (which drained the pond) besides teeth, a rib not four feet under the surface was found. Some portion

of it was decayed or broken off, but the fragment was long enough to reach from the floor over the head of the writer, then five feet eleven inches in height. A large fragment of a tusk was discovered by the late Governor Wyndham Robertson, Sr., on his place. It was about four feet long and four or five inches in diameter.

Leaving the prehistoric period and coming to that of the Aborigines, curious fragments of skeletons were discovered in 1848 or 1850 by a party of students from Emory and Henry College, headed by Frank Hampton (youngest brother of General Wade Hampton) in a cave back of the Madam Russell house. The existence of this cave was known, but its orifice was almost closed by the accumulation of earth washed from the surrounding hills, and only a small hole was left. The earth was removed and an easy entrance made for the exploring party, and, furnished with candles and matches, they entered the cave. Upon a ledge of rock, which was apparently cut for the purpose, were found the skulls and other portions of two human skeletons. That of a man was of almost gigantic proportions and of peculiar shape. The forehead or frontal bone was so retreating that it gave the impression of being artificially pressed back. The upper temporal ridge was rather flat. The back or occipital bone was abnormally large. Only the jaw teeth remained, and they were uncommonly large and strong. The leg bone of this skeleton, when put upon the floor, reached to the knee joint of the writer, and this, by comparative proportion, would indicate a height of about seven feet.

The other skull was that of a matured female, as



proved by other portions of the skeleton. It was not larger than that of a child, but was of as beautiful proportions and developments as a model. The bones of this skeleton indicated a stature not over three feet and a half or four feet.

If these were fair specimens of the races that dwelt in or frequented that picturesque country, then "there were giants in those days," and, perhaps, fairy-like pigmies.

The salt property remained undeveloped until about 1782—perhaps as late as 1785-'86. At one time it came near being sacrificed for a small amount. Charles Campbell, the patentee, had occasion to go to Orange Court-house, then the seat of justice, and whilst there was arrested for the non-payment of taxes, and kept "in prison bounds" until they were paid. He wrote to his wife, explaining his dilemma, and requested her to sell the Salt Lick tract and ransom him. She replied, "Remain where you are and I will pay the taxes." It was autumn and the flax was prepared for spinning, and she spun many hanks of beautiful, smooth thread, and, mounting her horse, took it to market and sold it for more than the amount of the taxes and brought her husband home. Small bunches of this thread were given by Mrs. Sarah B. Preston (her granddaughter) to every member of her family, and they are kept as a prized memorial of the skill and industry of that spirited and noble woman. She was the sister of John Buchanan, the son-in-law of Colonel James Patton. The author of this sketch, the only surviving member of Mrs. Preston's



family, has still in his possession the little hank given him by his mother.

#### ORGANIZATION OF WASHINGTON COUNTY.

Washington county was organized at Black's Fort, January 28, 1777. On the 29th this order was made:

“Ordered, that William Campbell, William Edmiston, John Anderson and George Blackburn be appointed commissioners to hire wagons to bring up the county salt, allotted by Governor and council, and to receive and distribute the same agreeably to said order of council.”

“Ordered, that Captain Robert Craig and Captain John Shelby be added to the commissioners appointed to receive and distribute the flour contributed in *Augusta* or elsewhere for the distressed inhabitants of the county.”

These are surprising and startling *orders* of the first court held for Washington county, and would indicate a state of destitution wholly unexpected among the Freeholders of the recently defunct Fincastle county. The first named commissioner to hire wagons to bring up the salt allotted by the Governor and Council from Staunton, perhaps, or some place east of the Blue Ridge, was the owner of the Salt Lick, where an almost inexhaustible supply could, with little labor, have been obtained. His associates were intelligent, influential and prominent men in the community, but to none of them,

nor any member of the court, did it occur that so great a treasure was only eighteen miles distant.

Another inference drawn from the last order is that no flour mill had been built in that section of country. The abundance of water power unutilized wasted its strength in the shadow of overhanging trees. The early settlers were too much occupied in clearing up the land for crops that would supply urgent and pressing necessity to give any time to diverting the water's current and building mills. Self-protection was the problem of the day, and every family had to provide for itself. But this *selfishness*, instead of separating families, led to combinations and, by mutual help, accomplished what no individual or single family could accomplish. So, when a new family reached the neighborhood and the cabin was to be built, the men for miles around gathered in, and the men of reputation for carrying up corners took their places of prominence with axe in hand, and rapidly notched and fitted the logs as they were lifted up to them.

The cause for this destitution may, perhaps, have been the absence of those patriot soldiers who had marched under William Campbell in September, 1775, to Williamsburg to aid Patrick Henry in forcing Governor Dunmore to return the gunpowder he had removed from the old magazine to the schooner "Magdalen," at anchor in the James river. The promptness with which they left their homes allowed no time for providing for their families. These were, therefore, wards of the Commonwealth, and provided for by their neighbors and the State. If this be not the cause of the destitution, then the substantial

citizens who signed the call to Rev. Charles Cummings, in 1773, and the Freeholders of Fincastle county who met at Fort Chiswell on the 20th of January, 1775, must have made slow progress in clearing and cultivating the fertile lands selected for their homes.

After General William Campbell's death (August 22, 1781) Arthur Campbell (one of his executors) took charge of his estate, and, finding that some persons had made salt at the Salt Lick, determined to develop it more fully himself. By what means he did so is not known. He, however, foresaw the value of the property and the necessity of securing an abundant supply of fuel for the prospective furnaces. He therefore entered a large tract of land adjoining the Salt Lick tract and smaller tracts in the vicinity in the name of Charles Henry Campbell, the infant son of General William Campbell. This child died when he was five years old, and the property descended to his sister, Sarah Buchanan Campbell, who married General Francis Preston. A dispute arose between Colonel Arthur Campbell and General William Russell (who had married the widow of General Campbell) about the guardianship of Sarah B. Campbell, and to reconcile the family disputes the court appointed, in 1789, Colonel Thomas Madison (whose wife was a sister of Mrs. Russell) guardian of the child. In the interest of his ward he came to the Salt Lick about 1790, and built a log cabin on the site of the Preston house; dug a well on the margin of the flat below, and commenced the manufacture of salt in the primitive mode of the times.

The salt-house was of hewed logs. The salt was lifted from the kettle by long-handled dippers, and put into

baskets of splits over the kettles to drain. When sufficiently drained these baskets were carried along the platform and emptied into the salt-house which stood some thirty feet away from the furnace.

Before Colonel Madison assumed the guardianship of Sarah B. Campbell, General William Russell, who had married the widow of General William Campbell in 1783, moved his family from Aspinvale, in February, 1788, to the "Salt Lick," and built the famous Madam Russell house. This move was prompted by the purpose of General Russell to give his personal attention to the manufacture of salt, which was rapidly developing into an important industry.

General Russell dug a well on the margin of the flat in front of his house and obtained salt water, and built a furnace and salt-house. The furnace was an open shed, and the kettles were the camp kettles of that day, of a capacity of from eight to twelve gallons.

In 1792 General Russell's health failed, and he started for Williamsburg, where the Legislature, of which he was a member, was in session, but he died at the home of his son, Robert L. Russell, in Culpeper county, on the 14th of January, 1793.

In 1795, General Francis Preston had a frame building added to the log cabin of Thomas Madison, and in that or the next year made his home there. It was the first frame building erected in the valley. The carpenter was Francis Irby, who continued to be an inmate of the family for nearly forty years. The nails used in the building were made by a colored blacksmith, old Cyrus, a slave of General Preston, and so firm was their hold

in the timber that fifty years afterwards a chimney-mantelpiece could not be taken down without breaking it into fragments. The stone chimney at the west end of the house was built by Jesse Dungan, and when the cap-stone was placed he stood on his head upon it. It is still erect and remains as a monument to Dungan and his honest masonry.

General Preston also had a well dug near to that of Colonel Madison. It was an open shaft of between eight and ten feet in diameter and about eighty feet deep. It was "cribbed" or lined with hewed logs to prevent the earth from crumbling in. The water in all the wells in this locality rose to within twenty or thirty feet of the surface, and was nearly as strong as that at the western border of the valley. But as the surface and seepage water gradually found its way into these open shafts the strength of the brine was diminished, and other wells were dug.

The water was drawn up in large buckets by a windlass and emptied into an open trough that led to cisterns near the furnace. These furnaces were open sheds similar to that of General Russell, but of greater dimensions and larger kettles. The chimneys were not more than fifteen feet high, and though the draft was sufficient to burn the wood, it did not convey the heat far enough back to boil the water in the kettles near the chimney, a distance of thirty or forty feet.

On the 8th of October, 1795, William King bought from John Musgrove and wife a tract of land of 150 acres for £500. This was the tract entered by Evan Lee, and adjoined the Salt Lick on the west. Lee sold to James



Crabtree for £120, and Crabtree sold to Musgrove for £100. Musgrove made a good speculation, but lost a large fortune by his sale.

Mr. King offered to transfer his purchase to General Preston, telling him that he (King) was sure that salt water could be had upon it. But General Preston replied that there was enough for both of them, and he would rather King should share with him than any one else. They were brother Masons.

When King began his well is not known. He located it so near the line of the Salt Lick tract that the earth thrown out by the laborers fell over the line of that tract. He struck water, practically a saturation of salt water, at the depth of about 200 feet, in 1799, and promptly began the construction of a furnace and other buildings. As the well was at the head of the valley the surface drainage did not at first weaken the water, and the yield of a bushel of salt (fifty pounds) was obtained from thirty-two gallons of water. The water weighed nine pounds per gallon.

In Jedediah Morse's geography, printed in 1805, there is this account of "Preston's Salines":

"The mammoth, the king of the land animals, was "formerly an inhabitant of this country, as appears from "his bones which have been dug up by laborers at Preston's salines, North Holston, when sinking salt pits. "They were from three to seven feet below the surface "of the earth. The bones have also been found at a lick "near Nashville. Preston's salines mentioned above are "on the North Fork of Holston, half a mile south of the "river, seventeen or eighteen easterly from Abingdon.



“The tract that contains these salines is a great curiosity.  
“It was discovered by Captain Charles Campbell about  
“1745, who was one of the first explorers of the western  
“country. In 1753 he procured a patent for it from the  
“Governor of Virginia. His son, the late General Wil-  
“liam Campbell, the same who behaved so gallantly in  
“the American war in the year 1780 and 1781, became  
“owner of it on his death. But it was not till the time  
“of his death, when salt was very scarce and dear that  
“salt water was discovered, and salt made by a poor man.  
“After this time, under the direction of Colonel Arthur  
“Campbell, it was improved to a considerable extent,  
“and many thousands of inhabitants are now supplied  
“from it with salt—a superior quality—at a low price.  
“The tract consists of about 300 acres of flat marsh land  
“of as rich a soil as can be imagined. In this flat pits  
“are sunk in order to obtain the salt water. They are  
“from sixty to ninety feet deep. After passing through  
“the rich soil or mud, you come to a very brittle lime-  
“stone rock, with cracks or chasms through which the  
“salt water issues into the pits, whence it is drawn by  
“buckets and put into the boilers, which are placed in  
“furnaces adjoining the pits. The hills that surround  
“this flat are covered with fine timber. Near this Mr.  
“King has a well more than 200 feet deep, ten feet  
“square constantly more than half full of water. Thirty-  
“two gallons of this, and some of the other wells, make  
“one bushel of salt. Two hundred bushels have been  
“made in a day. It is equal to Liverpool salt. He can  
“supply the State of Tennessee and Southwest Virginia  
“with this essential article.”

This account of the salines was, in all probability, written early in 1800, as King struck water in his well in 1799, and rented the Preston salines on the 20th of February, 1801. Except in some unimportant facts it is a very good account of the valley at that time. The date of Charles Campbell's "discovery" is antedated three years, and the discovery of the "poor man" was in utilizing what was known to the aborigines, as previously stated. The present owners of the salines may be surprised at the quantity of salt produced and the area of country to be supplied.

It has been stated that William King rented the Holston Salt-Works on the 20th of February, 1801, for ten years. As this first lease of the Preston estate contains many peculiar stipulations, the following extracts are given. After describing the different tracts of land embraced in the lease the contract proceeds:

"And should there not be wood enough on said lands, together with the tract of land on which John Broddy now resides, adjoining Saltville, and suitable for splitting and good for wood to make up the quantity of 62,600 cords of wood and likewise furnish rails for the land now rented from the said Preston, then the said King is to have permission to cut cord wood to that amount on any part of the said Preston's lands, and hawl the same to the Saltworks or the works rented of the said Preston, as the said King may choose or find it convenient."

This rapid consumption of wood would soon have stripped the adjoining lands of the primitive forest.

Fortunately, however, it renewed itself rapidly, and the writer had cut from land that had been cut over twenty-five years previously as much as fifty cords per acre.

Permission was given to King to quarry rock at any quarry and haul this and all farm and other products over the rented premises, and to dig mines and search for salt-water and minerals, etc., on the premises and dispose of them during the lease; and to rent all or any part of the said premises, and at the expiration of the lease to remove his salt and other property, provided it was done within nine months.

The annual rental for all this property and privileges was \$12,000, to be paid to Francis Preston or his order or representative on the 10th day of March, 1802. The first payment was to be at that date, and the last at the expiration of the lease. For the first three years one-third was to be paid in cash at Abingdon and one-half in an order on a merchant or merchants in Richmond or Baltimore, where said King may deal, current wholesale selling price, at six months, on such articles as said Preston may choose out of the said wholesale store; the remaining \$2,000 in salt at Saltville at ten per cent. discount from the said King's selling prices. Residue of the term eight thousand dollars in cash, and four thousand in Mdse, as before mentioned annually. \* \* \* \* \*

"The said Francis Preston further contracts and agrees that in case other salt-works being erected within one hundred miles easterly or northerly or within three hundred miles westwardly or southwardly from said premises in this State of Virginia or Tennessee or North Carolina, that one or all of the said works within the said

bounds make 20 bushels per day or upwards, the said lease to be void, if chosen by the said William King or his heirs or executors, etc. Then or at any time thereafterwards he, the said William King or his heirs, etc., chooses by giving said Francis Preston or his representatives, etc., a written or personal notice or advertising on the door of the court-house of Washington county aforesaid, three months previously, of his, the said King's intentions. It is also agreed that in case any other salt-works being established in the said bounds, even in making a less quantity than twenty bushels per day, that should the said King think proper to sacrifice his salt by selling at or under one dollar per bushel, the said Preston agrees that the said premises and works shall be rent free during the time the said King sells salt at or under one dollar per bushel at Saltville; and in that case the said Preston, if he thinks proper, may commence salt-making on his own premises, and the lease is to expire if he chooses at the cease of the rent."

"It is also further agreed that, upon two years' trial, should the said King choose, he is at liberty to make void the lease by giving twelve months' notice in the manner of the notice before expressed," and in any future year "the same privilege, even in case of no salt opposition, "only the notice of twelve months' notice in this case "is required, during which the said Preston is at liberty "to dig wells and prepare for salt-making in the manner "contracted at the end of the two years' lease, should "the said King choose to hold it so long as hereafter "mentioned.'"

There are many other stipulations by which all proba-

ble contingencies are provided against. The above are given chiefly to show the mutual confidence of the parties and the apprehension on the part of King that salt water might be found within the area of the market, and salt be made and sold for less than one dollar per bushel. The fear of such competition continued for many years, and many persons supposed that salt water would be discovered in the near neighborhood of Saltville. Both Francis Smith and James White dug deep wells upon their lands bordering upon the river without finding a trace of salt. The only trace ever found was by Mr. Wyndham Robertson in a deep well (about 500 feet) sunk near the line of the King estate, on the western slope of the Salt-Works Valley.

William King was very successful in his business affairs, and had many mercantile establishments in Virginia and Tennessee. He died in 1808, and by his will directed that the salt estate and mercantile establishments should be managed, as equals in partnership, by his brother, James King, William Trigg (who had married his niece, Rachel Findlay), and his wife during the life of the latter. Mrs. King renounced her interest under the will of her husband, but united with James King and William Trigg in an agreement for working the salines. James King died in 1809, and by his will devised and directed, as far as his estate was interested in the salt-works, that it be carried on according to an agreement entered into between Mary King, William Trigg and himself, and that his part be under the direction of his executor, Charles S. Carson, to whom one-third of the profits was given as



compensation for his services. The other two-thirds were divided between his wife Sarah and his three children, William, Thomas and Rachel Mary Eliza. In 1813 William Trigg died, leaving Lilburn L. Henderson as his executor.

The business of the salt-works was carried on by these parties until May, 1819, when James White and the creditors of William Trigg filed a bill in chancery, alleging waste and non-payment of William King's debts. The prayer of the bill was granted, and James White was appointed receiver. On the 17th of June, 1819, Francis Smith, who had married the widow of William King; Thomas Claiborne, who married the widow of James King, and L. L. Henderson, who married the widow of William Trigg, in right of his wife, and as guardian of William Trigg's children, leased the salt-works to John Sanders for five years from August 1, 1819, at an annual rent of \$30,000.

The next year James White purchased the lease from Sanders, and continued in possession until 1833.

When this striking figure and remarkable man, James White, appears upon the stage an introduction is not only appropriate, but necessary. He was over six feet high, of broad shoulders, deep chest, and that symmetry of limb that indicate agility and strength. His physical energy surpassed that of ordinary men, and his intellectual endowments may (in part) be measured by his success in business. He was born near Carlisle, Pennsylvania, February 22, 1770, of Scotch-Irish parents, and when quite young was a clerk in the concern of Talbot, Jones & Co., of Baltimore, Md. With them he remained



two or three years, and that firm advanced him a small stock of goods, with which he made his first trip to Southwest Virginia. He quickly sold the same, and thus began his business ventures in that country when about twenty-one years of age. On the 4th of January, 1798, he married Miss Eliza Wilson, and settled in Abingdon. All of his enterprises seemed to prosper, and his control of the salt-works and its markets for salt enabled him to establish a great number of mercantile concerns (it is said forty-five at one time) in the States of Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia, and from the profits of these and the sale of salt large revenue was derived. These profits were invested in large interests of the Lead Mines in Wythe county; in cotton plantations, slaves and other property, which were worth at least \$750,000 at his death. He died October 20, 1838.

As bold and sagacious as he was, he made some grave mistakes in his business. The most remarkable, perhaps, was in his contract with James Sanders, by which he agreed to take all the salt that Sanders could make at one dollar per bushel. The estimate of the capacity of King's salines for the production of salt was from 90,000 to 100,000 bushels, and that amount could easily be sold at a large profit. But Sanders built additional furnaces, and there seemed to be no limit to the production and the consequent glutting of the market.

To avoid the threatened bankruptcy, Colonel White offered Sanders large sums to cancel the contract. At last it was agreed that if Colonel White would purchase the beautiful estate on the Middle Fork of Holston, lying west of the Aspinvale tract, and extending to Colonel

Greavers, below the present Chilhowie, and deed it to Sanders, the contract would be cancelled. Tradition says this purchase cost Colonel White \$75,000.

Before the lease to Sanders expired, in 1824, Colonel White renewed it for himself, and retaining peaceable possession of the property, began with his usual energy to increase the production of salt and extend the area of the market. Unfortunately, the interest of Rachel Mary Eliza, only daughter of James King, and wife of Dr. Alexander McCall, was not included in the lease.

In order to understand these complicated interests it is necessary to revert to another peculiar bequest in the will of William King, Sr. Wishing in some measure to entail his estate he devised the salt-works property to a son of his brother, James King, provided he married a daughter of William Trigg and Rachel Findlay (his wife), and niece of William King. But in default of such a marriage, to a son of William Trigg and Rachel, his wife, provided he married a daughter of James King. It so happened that William Trigg and wife had only four sons and James King only one daughter, Rachel Mary Eliza, and she married Dr. Alexander McCall. After years of litigation the Supreme Court of the United States decided that as the bequest of the testator could not be complied with the property descended to his heirs general. This decision made all of the heirs of William King co-tenants of the salt-works estate. As Dr. McCall, by his marriage with Miss Rachel Mary Eliza, only daughter of James King, had defeated the bequest of the salt-works to that family, he appeared to be infatuated with the purpose of obtaining some indemnity for it. His

wife's interest not being legally included in the lease to Colonel White, he refused to receive his proportion of the rent, and in the name of his wife and others brought suit against Colonel White for possession, as co-tenant, of a part of the property, and also for rents and profits from 1824. This suit was not decided until February 15, 1833, when Judge James E. Brown delivered his opinion, by which McCall and others were denied the right of entering upon the property, but given the right of an account of rents and profits.

On the 2d of September, 1833, Colonel White leased the King Salt-Works to Alex. McCall and William King at an annual rent of \$15,972, during the life of Mrs. Francis Smith, formerly Mrs. William King. On the same day McCall and King leased the Preston estate at an annual rent of \$16,000.

From the time of the first lease the policy of the lessees was to prevent competition. As the water on the King estate was stronger than that on the Preston, more furnaces were erected by the lessees on the former than on the latter, and hence the salines were generally known as "King's Salt-Works." The furnaces on the Preston estate were neglected, and were soon in a dilapidated condition. The seepage-water from the neighboring marsh diluted the water in the wells until the impression was made that this estate could not compete with King's in the manufacture of salt. The rental value of the former, therefore, was so lessened that General Preston decided to develop and manufacture salt on his own property. His son, William C. Preston, took charge of the property, and was so successful that the lessee of the

King estate, who was paying a large rental, soon discovered that the competition was too formidable, and to realize any profit a lease of the Preston estate was absolutely necessary. This lessee was Colonel James White. He greatly increased the production of salt, and extended the area of the market. Nearly all of the furnaces were on the King estate, and the salt transported on the river was hauled in wagons to different points of shipment. This involved heavy expense. It was during Colonel White's lease that the earth around King's well caved in some ten or fifteen feet below the surface, and the cavity was filled by a pool of water. To support the superincumbent earth and check the influx of surface water, he had many cords of wood thrown into the cavity.

Colonel White ceased to rent the Preston salines in 1829. In 1830 Charles H. C. Preston, son of General Preston, was put in possession of the Preston estate, and dug a well in the vicinity of King's well, and obtained as strong water as the latter. To avoid the expense of hauling salt to the river he built furnaces where the alkaline-works are located, and conveyed the water in wooden tubes to them. He died on the 13th of January, 1832, before his more advanced plans of manufacturing salt were matured. After his death John S. Preston, the managing partner of John S. Preston & Co., lessees of their father, Francis Preston, took charge of the property, and he employed a northern man (Anthony) to put a pump in the new well. It was of iron, and soon began to leak. In the course of the next year (September 1, 1833) King and McCall rented the entire salines and estab-

lished their offices and dwellings at the river works. Their lease of the Preston property continued till 1845. Before its expiration, it was decided by the Court of Appeals that the heirs of William King were "tenants in common," and that any one of them had the right to enter upon the property and work the salines, accounting to the other heirs for profits. In the exercise of this right, after the death of Mrs. Smith (1839), Messrs. Alexander and Thomas Findlay, nephews of William King, with John D. Meitchell and others, as Findley, Meitchell & Co., took joint possession with King and McCall of the King well, and began the manufacture of salt. This competition was fatal to King and McCall, and they, failing to pay the rent of the Preston estate, gave up the property January, 1845, and Thomas L. Preston was given the management of it.

During that year an effort was made to unite the two estates under a common management. All the parties in interest agreed upon the terms of the contract, but when it was written and many had signed, Dr. Alexander McCall, for himself and William King, refused to sign. He had been present at all of the conferences, discussed the various stipulations, and urged their acceptance. This breach of faith arrested for a time the efforts for a combination, but it was regarded as so important to the interests of all other parties that an agreement was entered into by other heirs of the King estate, and Thomas L. Preston, and the business was commenced on that footing. Mr. McCall soon began building a furnace on the King estate, and this led to a long chancery suit. The court finally decided to take charge of the property



and have it rented for the heirs general of William King. Under this decree of the court Thomas L. Preston rented the King estate at an annual rent of \$16,000 for five years on the 1st of January, 1846. At the expiration of his lease Wyndham Robertson became the lessee of both estates for five years at \$16,000 annually for each. On the expiration of his lease Thomas L. Preston again rented the King estate on the same terms for five years. During the occupancy of King and McCall no profits were declared.

When Thomas L. Preston took charge of the Preston saline estate it was in a very dilapidated condition. The farm had been neglected, and some fifty or sixty tenants were scattered among the hills and valleys. The ditches in the flat were filled, and the swamp land extended in every direction. The cattle of the neighborhood grazed unmolested on the meadows, as there was only a pretence of a fence to keep them out. The old residence had been occupied by rough tenants, and the doors on which the old brass locks, with their pendant handles were still attached, were fastened by a trace chain that passed through an inch augur hole over a rough staple driven into the side-post. The papering in the parlor hung in shreds, and the closets were nests of rats and mice. The out-houses were in a state of decay, and the only shelter for a saddle-horse was a corn-crib without a floor.

The furnaces were in nearly as bad a condition. They were open sheds, and the long, heavy oval-shaped kettles were imbedded more than one-half of their area in rough walls, so that but a little more than a third of the convex surface was exposed to the fire.



William King invited the gentlemen who were to appraise the personal property agreed to be taken by the incoming tenant to dinner. The principal dish was a roasted pig, and a former man-cook of the Preston's was given the duty of preparing it. He stood upon the abutment of the chimney and turned the spit on the top of it. It was not more than four feet high. It is not surprising that the lessees failed who used such primitive and inadequate processes of making salt.

The first furnace modeled after those of Syracuse, New York (with some original improvements), was built by Thomas L. Preston in 1845-'6. It was located opposite the *old* office, and was burned by the Yankees in 1864.

In 1847, Thomas L. Preston had a ditch dug six feet wide and four feet deep from the northeastern corner of the valley to the old mill at the foot of the "Sugar Loaf Hill," on the east. When the ditches reached a point nearly opposite the Madam Russell house they reported that a rock was struck that was too hard to be removed by their picks. The rock ran vertically into the flat, and on the eastern side a salt spring of considerable volume rose in the bottom of the ditch. When this barrier was removed the water poured in such volume from the pond and the adjoining marsh that the progress of the ditch was delayed for several days, and lateral ditches were cut to convey it off. The earth from the ditch was thrown on the eastern bank and formed the basis of the present road through the valley. The entire flat was drained by this ditch.

In 1858, Thomas L. Preston, then the lessee of the King salines, rented both estates to Spencer Ackerman & Co.

In 1863, Stuart, Palmer and Parker purchased the Preston property from Robert Gibboney, trustee of Thomas L. Preston, and in 1864 a joint stock company of the two estates was formed under the title of the Holston Salt and Plaster Company. In 1893 the joint saline estates were purchased by the present proprietors.

## CHAPTER IV.

The early settlers of the vicinity of the Salt-Works were a primitive and peculiar class of people, unlearned and superstitious, but, like most frontiersmen, manly and independent. The buffalo and elk had disappeared from the country, but deer, bear and other game was abundant, and every man was a hunter and skilled in the use of the rifle. They knew nothing of the luxuries of life.

On one occasion, when a neighbor was sick, General Preston visited him, and finding that he was only weak and depressed, asked if he would not like to have some coffee. He said that he would, and the General sent a few pounds. A few days afterwards the General called again, and asked how he liked the coffee. He replied, "Well, Gineral, I am much obleged for your kindness, "but my old woman *biled them beans all day most*, and they "were jist so hard I couldn't eat 'em."

The women often came and talked with Mrs. Preston. Of these there was a notable character, a Mrs. Henagar, who had the reputation of being a witch. Her upper eyelids were paralyzed and drooped over her eyes, giving her the appearance of being blind. Whenever she read her Bible she was obliged to stoop over it and hold the lids up with her hands. Then her vision was perfect. Mrs. Preston asked her, "Why, Mrs. Henagar, do people say

you are a witch?" "Law, bless your sweet soul, honey," she replied, "it's because I have got more sense than all of 'em put together." This bad reputation, however, clung to her, and every rifle that had "a spell" upon it, and every child that had convulsions in the neighborhood was supposed to be bewitched by Mrs. Henagar. So fixed was this belief that Charley Talbot, a notable hunter and marksman, once had "a spell" on his gun, and he could not win at shooting matches nor kill a deer in the woods. He said that Mrs. Henager had a "grudge" against him, and had put the "spell" on his gun. To avenge himself and rid the neighborhood of this supposed meddlesome person, he determined to practice a "spell" upon her. To accomplish this it was necessary to draw an outline of her figure upon a tree and shoot it in the heart with a bullet in which there was a large portion of silver. This he did, but, to his surprise, Mrs. Henager did not "pine away and die," but continued in her usual health. He was, therefore, convinced that it was not Mrs. Henagar that had "spelled" his gun, but some other witch.

Many other stories of witchcraft were circulated and believed, but, perhaps the best authenticated was that of the children of young Mrs. Talbot and her cousin, Mrs. Henagar. They lived together on the north side of the river, about a mile from the King Salt-Works. Their children were little girls, nearly of the same age, and had learned to talk well enough to be understood. On a bright summer day the two mothers barred the door of the house in which the children were left, and went to the river side to do their washing. Suddenly there was

a noise and shrill outcry from the house, and the mothers ran back to it. On entering the door one of the children was found sitting in the "crib," and the other greatly excited and alarmed running about the floor. Soon it was discovered that the one on the floor had lost the power of articulation; was, indeed, dumb, and the other, in the cradle, was paralyzed in its lower limbs, but could speak. No intelligent explanation of what had occurred could be given by the only child which could talk, and, as far as she could indicate, the only cause for alarm was that a *black cat* had come down the chimney with *a cap on its head*. This solved the mystery, and was accepted by the families and the neighborhood as a clear case of witchcraft. Subsequent events confirmed the opinion.

On the anniversary of this event the mothers and children went to bed just as they had done for a year; but, lo! when they awoke next morning the paralyzed child sprang up and ran about the floor as actively as her cousin had done the day before, but that cousin sat in bed talking in the advanced language of a year, but could not move her legs. This periodical interchange of condition continued for two or more years, and until the paralyzed child sickened and died. The dumb one lived to be an old woman. In her youth she was bright and cheerful; loved dancing, and attended the festivities of the neighborhood. She kept house for her brothers, and when one of them lost his wife, she took care of and attended to his children.

The writer of this visited the family when Miss Talbot was an elderly woman, and was struck with her tidiness,



and the neatness and orderly management of the household. He cannot fix the date when she particularly requested him to come to her house, as she wished to consult with him on an important matter of business. When he arrived her brother was in the room, and spoke for her the usual greetings and inquiries. She then motioned to him to retire, and send to her a negro girl (one of her slaves), whom she had taught to be her interpreter. This girl informed the writer that her mistress wished him to write her *will*. Writing materials were produced, and Miss Talbot, through her interpreter, explained how she wished to dispose of her estate, real and personal. She owned five or six slaves, and for these (especially her interpreter) she made kind, considerate and judicious provision. The landed estate was left for life to her brothers, but in trust for the nephews and nieces she had brought up. As each bequest was read, if it did not explicitly express her wishes she would pause and then insist upon such changes as did. Her mind was as clear as the clearest, and there was no uncertainty in her purposes.

She was asked if the story about her cousin and herself was true. She replied, "Of course I do not remember anything about it, but was told that it happened as you have heard it. I have no recollection of being able to speak."

The sequel is a sad one. After Thomas L. Preston moved to eastern Virginia, a plausible and designing man persuaded Miss Talbot that Mr. Preston had deceived her, and instead of writing her *will* as she dictated, had inserted a clause bequeathing the slaves and, perhaps, some other property to himself. But if she would let



him destroy that will and write one for her the property would be secured to those she wished to leave it to. She yielded to these suggestions, and the will was written and duly executed. When, after Miss Talbot's death, it was presented for recordation, then it was discovered that the slaves were bequeathed to this pretended friend. He took possession of them, brought them to the court-house and *sold them* as his own. The family protested against this fraud, but were unable to set the will aside. This information was obtained from Benjamin K. Buchanan, who knew the facts, and whose integrity and veracity cannot be questioned.

Another incident characteristic of that period may be mentioned. Colonel Francis Preston was in Philadelphia when a ship, having many immigrants, arrived. Those immigrants who could not pay for their passage were sold as servants for a term of years fixed by the price paid for them. Hence they were called "Redemptioners." Colonel Preston was struck by the appearance of a young German, bought him, and brought him to his home. It was soon discovered that he was an educated gentleman, spoke English, and was an accomplished musician. Instead of putting him to menial service, he was installed as music teacher to Colonel Preston's daughters. In this capacity he continued until his term of service expired. On the day before its expiration, Colonel Preston said to him, "I wish you to dress in your best clothes for dinner to-morrow." At the appointed hour he presented himself, and when he was ushered into the parlor he stood abashed at the door, for Colonel and Mrs. Preston, with their children, were in full dress. The Colonel

advanced and held out his hand, saying, "Mr. ———, your term of service is ended, and we welcome you into our family circle as a gentleman and friend." At this unexpected greeting he broke down and wept like a woman. His coming to America was caused by a painful and humiliating incident. Whilst on a visit to England he was made drunk by a party of gay young men, and during that insensate condition was married to a woman of the streets. When he awoke next morning and found what had occurred, and that by the laws of England the marriage was legal, he was so horrified and overwhelmed with shame that he started promptly for Liverpool, and took passage in the first vessel sailing to America. Fortunately, he fell into the hands of Colonel Preston, and after his term of service expired continued to live as one of the family, until the good news reached him that the woman he had married was dead, and that he could return untrammelled to his family in Germany.\*

A somewhat similar incident occurred in the family of Colonel William Preston, of Montgomery county, father of Francis. He bought a "redemptioner," and after bringing him home, discovered that he was an educated physician. His name was Thomas Lloyd. He was treated as one of the family, and when in the summer of 1767, Colonel William Preston with Thomas Lewis were ap-

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\* Mrs. Letitia Floyd, in her letters to her son, Ben. Rush Floyd, is mistaken in saying this German was purchased by her father, Colonel William Preston, and says his name was Aaron Palferras. This may be true of the name: I cannot recall it. The incidents of the German's residence at the Saltworks I often heard from my mother, Mrs. Sarah B. Preston.

pointed commissioners by Governor Dinwiddie to make a treaty with Shawnee and Delaware Indians at the mouth of Big Sandy river, Dr. Lloyd was taken with them. Mrs. Letitia Floyd (from whose letters to her son this account is taken), says: "Lewis, I believe, did not accompany the party. The treaty was made with Ocanothoto (?) and Cornstalk. Colonel Preston endured singular hardships in this expedition; he had tied his moccasins somewhat too tight; the string chafed the instep of one of his feet, which produced partial mortification. The skill of Dr. Lloyd saved his life. The Doctor continued a companion and died many years afterwards, the firm friend of the Preston family."

The descendants of many of the redemptioners were among the most respectable families of a later period.



## CHAPTER V.

Charley Talbot, whose belief in "*spells*" has been mentioned, was a notable character in his day, and illustrates by his career some of the traits and opinions of the mountaineers of that period. He was short of stature, only five feet eight inches high, broad shouldered, deep-chested and lithe of limb, of great strength and agility. One of his feats of strength was to rest the back of his head on one chair and his heels on another and sustain a weight of 225 pounds on his chest or stomach. So fleet was he that he would bet he could beat any horse in a race of 100 yards, if the horse's head were turned from the course to be run when the word "go" was given, and a hurdle of rails five feet high placed midway the course. These wagers he continued to win until in the meridian of life, he and the horse reached the rails simultaneously and Charley's legs were caught in the top rail, struck by the horse, and his thigh-bone was broken.

So skilled was he with the rifle that in the shooting matches for beef he occasionally won the entire ox. The arrangement was that a neighbor gave notice that on a certain day and place he would offer a fat beef to be shot for. When the crowd assembled a price was put upon the animal and an auction followed for the different parts of it. It was divided into *five quarters*. The first and most

valuable was the *hide* and *tallow*; then the hind quarters, and, lastly, the two fore quarters. If the sums bid equaled the price of the beef, marksmen chosen by the parties began the contest. Each marksman had his own target, and the best three shots out of five was the winner. The winner of the first quarter had the right to bid for the others, or take them in succession. Charley always bid in the first quarter, and if he won that continued to contend for the others, and thus secured the entire ox, and drove it home or sold it on the spot. If he failed to do this the ox was butchered and divided *pro rata* among the winners and their partisans.

Unfortunately, Charley was too fond of a dram, and to unsteady his hand and blur his keen vision he was sometimes persuaded to "wet his whistle" too often and shot wildly after the first contest. The distance shot was usually sixty yards for off-hand shooters, and one hundred for those who shot with a rest. Charley was always among the first class. He began life in the employment of General Preston, and had the cattle under his charge, but the routine and constraints of civilized life were irksome to one of his wild and erratic nature. He soon, therefore, after his marriage, built a cabin on a spur of Clinch Mountain.

This cabin was situated not far from a rough precipitous gorge and could be approached only by a steep, rough and narrow path. There, in seclusion, he and his wife (a fit mate for such a character) continued to live. Their frugal fare consisted chiefly of the game he killed with his rifle, and of that there was variety and abundance. Deer, bear, wild turkeys and pheasants (mountain



grouse) abounded, and the flesh of these, with the various forms of bread made of cornmeal, satisfied their simple tastes. For luxuries they had home-made sugar and coffee, and dried berries, and always an abundance of milk.

Charley had charge of herds of cattle sent by General Preston and Captain Francis Smith to the mountain coves for summer pasture, and attended to their salting, and saw that none strayed away. For this service he was paid, and this and his peltries gave him money for his small expenditures. In his early manhood he was the hunting companion of William C. Preston, of South Carolina, and together they roamed through the mountains and became familiar with every leading ridge and gorge of Clinch Mountain for many miles east and west, and with all the hills and valleys between that mountain and Walker's Mountain to the south. Mr. Preston leased a cabin and some land to a lame Irish cobbler named Walker, upon the condition that he should always keep a pack of hounds ready for the chase, and which he could call out at the sound of his horn. With this pack Mr. Preston and Charley would go into the "drive" and start the deer which they knew would, after the shorter or longer chase, run to certain "stands," where other hunters were stationed. Mr. Preston and Charley enjoyed the excitement of the chase and often killed a deer in the drive.

This community of tastes made Charley a devoted friend of Mr. Preston, whom he regarded as a superior being, and whose behests were to be obeyed without ques-

tioning. In the summer of 1845 Mr. Preston visited his brother Thomas at the Salt-Works, and as they sat looking at the White Rocks on the summit of Clinch Mountain, he said, "I would like to go up there once more before I die, and have Charley Talbot with me." He was assured that this could be accomplished. A messenger was dispatched to Charley, with the request that he would come the next morning before sunrise prepared to pilot the party on this expedition. He was on time, and after an early breakfast the party started. The old loyalty was as fresh in Charley's heart as it had been twenty-five years before, and he rode by the side of Preston talking as freely as he had done in the happy days of early manhood. In a pause when not far from the summit, Charley was by the side of Mr. Preston, who turned to him, and without preface, said, "Charley, did you have anything to do with the murder of Mrs. Caywood?" Charley turned quickly, and, straightening himself up, looked directly into Mr. Preston's eyes with a concentrated gaze, and replied deliberately, "William, you know Charley Talbot, and you *know* he is not a good man, but *you know* he wouldn't hurt a hair on a woman's head. No! I had nothing to do with it and am as innocent of that crime as you are yourself."

"Then, Charley, why did you hide in the mountains, and not let yourself be summoned to court?" asked Mr. Preston.

"Lord! William. I knowed they would put me in jail; and I'd 'ave died behind them bars," he replied.

Yes; the eagle in a cage would not have pined more than Charley Talbot in the cell of a prison. There was

further conversation about the murder, and the evidence in the case, and after a pause, Mr. Preston said, "Charley, were you ever minded to kill any one?" Charley did not answer promptly, but seemed to reflect for a moment, and then answered slowly, "No, William; not exactly. But there was that rascal F—— who told lies about me, and went to Captain Smith and told him that I did not salt his cattle regularly, and took into the cove other people's cattle, and when a steer was missing said it had died from eating some *pizon* (poisonous) weed, or had fallen over the cliff, when I had killed it, and sold what meat I did not keep for myself. I *knowed* the rascal wanted my place. So I went to Captain Smith and told him I heard F—— had been telling these lies on me, and that he ought to know Charley Talbot too well to believe them, as we had been boys together; and he knowed I took good care of his cattle, and gave an honest account of them every year. Well, one day I was still hunting, and was near the head of the *holler*, where the path across the ridge winds around it like a bow. I was standing on a log, but hidden by the brush that grew about it. As I looked around I saw F—— a riding, come over the top of the ridge. I set the triggers of 'Betty' (his rifle) so fine that a puff of wind would spring them." (In demonstration of his meaning he set the triggers of his rifle, and, holding it near Mr. Preston, then with a puff of breath sprang them.) "And I drew a bead (sight) upon his heart, and followed all around the path, saying to myself, 'If it is God's will to send a wind and kill this man, then 'tis all right.' But there was no wind,

and F——— passed on out of sight.” This question of casuistry was not discussed.

When the conversation ended we toiled on to the foot of the rocks. On the very apex these rocks are cleft to their base, leaving a smooth passway not over ten feet wide. On the southern and taller side there is a narrow ledge about eight feet from the base. As we entered the narrow defile, Charley exclaimed, “Just look there, what ‘a scuffle there has been!’ To T. L. Preston’s eyes, there ‘was no apparent evidence of a ‘great scuffle,’ but it was ‘clear to Charley, and, looking around, he said, ‘A panther caught a doe or spiked buck here last night. Yes; ‘he was lying on that ledge and when the deer passed ‘through, he sprang upon and knocked him down, and ‘then they scuffled, and tore up the ground until the ‘panther got him by the throat and cut his jugular vein ‘and sucked all the blood out of him. And that panther ‘aint far from here now. He heard us and has hidden. ‘If we had a dog we could soon trace him.’ Then, looking ‘over the ground, he said, ‘That deer aint far from here.’” We had dismounted, and, leaving the horses, Charley walked like a dog upon a trail directly to the root of a tree that had been blown down, where a pile of leaves had apparently drifted, and, pulling some of them away, uncovered the deer, saying as he did so, “I told you so.” Upon examining it, the meat was fresh, only a part of the thigh eaten; and upon the flanks and neck were the marks of the claws and teeth, and the large veins of the throat were punctured. Passing on to a moist and densely shaded depression, a large tree had fallen across our course, and as we neared it, Charley again said,

"Look there!" Stretched by the side of the tree lay the skeletons of two bucks, their heads together, and their horns so interlocked that they could not be separated without breaking the points. These were secured and brought home as mementoes of the expedition, and were entrusted to a *person* to be deposited in the Smithsonian Institute, at Washington. Neither this nor many other specimens of Indian and prehistoric relics were ever heard of afterwards.

On the return down the mountain we stopped at Charley's cabin, and, desiring to know how he avoided being arrested by the sheriff, the writer asked him for an explanation. He began by pointing out the "rack" for his rifle over the head of his bed, and which could be reached from a sitting position, and said, "There 'Betty' stays when not in my hands." Then to his saddle bags (wallets swung over a pole suspended by ropes from the joist), and by their side a suit of clothes. "Now, you see, Tommy, when Watch (his dog) gives the signal, I jist reach up for 'Betty,'; jerk down them saddle pockets and breeches, and am out before any one can git to the door." "But," said his interlocutor, "your house was surrounded." "Yes, but I lifted the bed off of that puncheon and slipped under, and my old woman lifted it back on it, and was in bed, mighty complaining, when they came in. If they lifted up the puncheon, they would only see a tater (potato) hole under it. I was out in the ravine, and no man could catch me there among them rocks and bushes." This subterraneous passage was never discovered, and Charley eluded the sheriff and posse until he was per-



suaded to give himself up and establish his innocence in court.

The murder of Mrs. Caywood was *the celebrated case* of the period, and excited an intense interest throughout the entire country. Ben Caywood was a prosperous blacksmith, and, with his brother Tom, owned most of the farm now owned by Benjamin K. Buchanan at Caywood's Gap, on the south of Walker's Mountain. He (Ben Caywood) became infatuated with a woman of the neighborhood named Prather, and, in order to marry her, it was necessary to get rid of his wife. A cunning and skillful plan was devised for this purpose. As his was a log house, about three inches of the *chinking* between the logs, near the door, was carefully removed, making an opening just large enough to admit the muzzle of a rifle. It was then arranged that Caywood and his wife would be engaged in paring apples before a bright fire. By that light the assassin could see distinctly how to fire the fatal shot.

Mrs. Caywood (there were no children) was placed nearest the door, and facing the fire presented her left side to the assassin, whilst Caywood sat on the other side of the fireplace, and out of the direction or line of the shooting. This was the description of a witness who looked in upon the party not more than five or ten minutes before the fatal shot.

He testified that he was returning to his home from the court at Abingdon, and as he approached the house, there was such a bright light from the door that he thought the house was on fire, and, turning out of the road, he reached a point so near the house that a full



view of the inmates could be obtained. The fire, he said, was of dry "clap-boards," once used for covering the house, and the bright flame from them made every object in the room distinctly visible.

He did not disturb the quiet group, but, turning back into the road, he had scarcely passed beyond the light from the door when he heard the crack of a rifle, and immediately screams and a great noise in the house followed. These screams reached the ears of Tom Caywood's family, not more than one hundred yards distant, and they rushed down the hill to Ben Caywood's house. He (Ben) appeared greatly excited, blood was streaming over his face, the room was in the greatest confusion, and Mrs. Caywood lay dead on the floor.

Ben said that an attempt had been made to kill him and his wife and rob the house, and that the robbers, after the shooting, rushed into the house, but that he had driven them out after a desperate struggle, in which he received the wound on his head; that the assassins missed him when they fired, and he showed in the fireplace the mark of the bullet that was intended for him. The mark of the powder on the log where the muzzle of the rifle had rested when Mrs. Caywood was shot was distinctly traceable as late as 1845, and was seen by the writer.

Colonel Francis Preston happened to be at the Salt-Works, and, as a magistrate and friend, was sent for. He arrived early the next morning, and began an examination into the circumstances and facts of the case. On examining Mrs. Caywood's body, he found that the rifle ball had passed through the heart, and that the shot was

accurately aimed. The powder mark on the log proved that only one shot had been fired from that point. Then Ben Caywood's rifle was examined, but it was covered with dust, and the condition of the lock showed that it had not been fired for some time. The premises were searched for footprints or any traces of the assassin. None were discovered. The mill-pond, which was but a short distance from the house, was dragged and drained to see if the gun used could have been thrown there. None was found. But the circumstances in which the murder was committed were such that Colonel Preston had Ben Caywood arrested. He at once became defiant and said he had money enough to get soon out of jail, and that there was \$1,000 in silver in his saddle-bags under the bed which he would take with him. This request was granted.

As stated before, Charley Talbot was suspected of killing Mrs. Caywood, but the only grounds for the suspicion seemed to be the accuracy of aim of the fatal shot, and that Charley was poor and lived a secluded life. He was of a kindly nature, with a touch of chivalry, and could then have proudly said "he would not hurt a hair on a woman's head." As there was no proof against him attention was directed to Prather, the brother of the woman Caywood wanted to marry. A train of suspicious circumstances centered at last upon him, and he was arrested and put in jail.

In due course of time the trial came on. Benjamin Estell (afterwards Judge) was attorney for the Commonwealth, and the defence was conducted by Charles C. Johnston, then a young man, but one of the most talented

of the talented sons of Judge Peter Johnston. So able and ingenious was the defence that the jury could not agree upon a verdict, and a new trial was ordered. Again there was a hung jury. When the time came for the third trial a panel could not be had in Washington county, as every man of sufficient intelligence to sit in the trial of such a case had made up his mind upon it. Subpoenas were sent to the adjoining counties of Tazewell, Russell and Scott, without success. After persistent efforts by the sheriffs and other officers a panel of eleven persons was at last obtained, but how to get the twelfth no one could tell. At last it was ascertained that the schoolmaster in Abingdon had said that he had not formed an opinion upon the case. He was a Swedenborgian, and entertained conscientious scruples against capital punishment. This was reported to Mr. Estell, and his reply was, "Let him be summoned. I can convince any intelligent and reasonable man of Caywood's guilt." He was accordingly brought into court, and after being questioned as to his opinions, was accepted as a juryman, cheerfully, no doubt, by Mr. Johnston. The testimony against Caywood and Prather was more conclusive than ever, and when the jury were sent to their room a verdict of *guilty* was confidently expected. After a long delay the foreman came into court and announced that the jury could not agree upon a verdict. The schoolmaster, though convinced of Caywood's guilt, refused to sign a verdict that involved capital punishment. As this was the third trial, and no verdict was found, the accused was acquitted. Caywood, his silver all gone, and Prather were set free,

but with the understanding that they should leave the country at once. This they did, and were never, as far as known, heard of afterwards. The schoolmaster's school was soon broken up, and he also left for parts unknown.

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NOTE.—I was one of his pupils then a lad of eight or ten summers.

T. L. P.

## CHAPTER VI.

The establishment of Washington county and its civil and military organization are interesting in themselves, and too characteristic of the period to be passed in silence. The extracts given from Major John Campbell's Manuscript History in Howe's History of Virginia are therefore copied in full:

“The act establishing the county of Washington passed in October, 1776, but it was not to go into operation until January, 1777. It received its civil and military organization on the 28th of January, 1777. It is the oldest county of Washington in the United States, being the first that was called after the Father of His Country. The act establishing the county passed in the first year of the Commonwealth, and the county was organized the first month of the new year.”

The following are the first records made in which the county received its civil and military organization:

“January 28th, in the first year of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and in the year of our Lord Christ, 1777, being the day appointed by act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia for holding the first court of the county of Washington at ‘Black’s Fort,’ a commission of the peace and Dedimus for this county, directed to Arthur Campbell, William Campbell, Evan Shelby,



Daniel Smith, William Edminson, John Campbell, Joseph Martin, Alexander Buchanan, James Dysart, John Kincaid, John Anderson, James Montgomery, John Coalier, John Snody, George Blackburn, and Moses Maston, gentlemen, bearing date the 21st day of December, 1776, were produced and read. Thereupon, pursuant to the Dedimus, William Campbell and Joseph Martin, two of the aforesaid justices, administered the oath of the justice of the peace, and of a justice of the county Court of Chancery to Arthur Campbell, the first justice named in said commission, and he afterwards administered the aforesaid oaths to William Campbell, William Edminson, and others named as aforesaid in the commission."

The records also state that James Dysart produced a commission as <sup>e</sup>county sheriff from Governor Patrick Henry, and security being given, he took the oath.

The sheriff having opened the court in the name of the Commonwealth of Virginia, David Campbell (afterwards Judge Campbell, of Tennessee,) was inducted into the office of county clerk.

Under these able and patriotic men the county of Washington was established, and has ever since maintained a reputation worthy of its noble founders.

An act for establishing a town at the court-house of the county of Washington was passed at the October (1778) session of the General Assembly. It provided, "That whereas it hath been represented to this General Assembly that Thomas Walker, Esquire, Joseph Black and Samuel Briggs have engaged to give one hundred and twenty acres of land in the county of Washington where the court-house of the said county now stands,



agreeable to a survey thereof, made by Robert Doach for the purpose of establishing a town thereon, and for raising a sum of money towards defraying the expenses of building a court-house and prison, agreeable to which part of the said land has been laid off and several lots sold and buildings erected thereon; and whereas it would tend to the more speedy improvement and selling of the farms of the freeholders and inhabitants thereof, could they be entitled to the same privileges enjoyed by the freeholders and inhabitants of other towns in this State. Be it enacted by this General Assembly that the said one hundred and twenty acres of land, agreeable to a survey thereof being had, be, and the same is hereby, vested in fee simple in Evan Shelby, William Campbell, Daniel Smith, William Edmiston, Robert Craig and Andrew Willoughby, gentlemen, trustees, and be established a town by the name of Abingdon.”

By giving the town this name the compliment to General Washington was consummated, as it is the name of the parish, perhaps the early home, of his wife.

These trustees were authorized to make conveyances to the purchasers of lots already sold, or to be sold, and lay off other parts of the lands in lots and streets, to be sold at public auction after giving three months' notice at the court-house on some court-day of that and adjoining counties. “The purchasers respectively to hold the said lots subject to the condition of building on such lots a dwelling-house at least twenty-four feet long\* and six—

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\* The same conditions for building houses on lots were in the first ordinance of the city of Richmond.

teen feet wide, with a brick or stone chimney, to be finished within four years from the day of sale."

The proceeds of these lots were held liable to the orders of the court of Washington county and applied to defraying the expenses of the public buildings and repairing the streets of the town. To the trustees authority was given to settle questions of boundary of the lots and everything else for the order and well-being of the town.

"And be it further enacted that if the purchaser of  
"any lots sold by the said trustees shall fail to build  
"thereon within the time before limited, the said trustees  
"or a major part of them, may thereupon enter into  
"such lot, and may either sell the same again and apply  
"the money towards repairing the streets, or in any other  
"way for the benefit of the said town, or they may appropriate the said lot or any part of it to any public use for  
"the benefit of the inhabitants of the said town."

That the title to the land given for the site of the town should be free from any incumbrance it was necessary that Dr. Thomas Walker (the original patentee), who had sold to Joseph Black and Samuel Briggs should unite in the deed. It may be that the two last had not fully paid for their purchases, and that Dr. Walker held a lien upon the land.

The town of Abingdon was originally a rectangular parallelogram, and occupied not more than twenty-five or thirty acres near the center of the survey. It extended from about forty yards from the branch on the east to the foot of the hill west of the court-house, and consisted of three wide parallel streets, running due east and west; two narrow alleys parallel with the above. These were

intersected at right angles by one broad street passing east of the court-house, and two narrow alleys, one east and the other west of the court-house.

The center street was Main street; that on the south Water street; that on the north Valley street. The alley south of Main street was "Trooper's alley," and that on the north "Chinquipin" or Plum alley; either name would have characterized it.

The court-house is on an oval hill, and the approach from either east or west was quite steep. Before the street was graded and macadamized it was no uncommon thing for a loaded wagon, during bad weather, to "stick in the mud" so deep as to require the aid of an additional team to extricate it. The court-house crowned the summit of the hill, and fronted south; the jail was quite near on the north, and across the street from it the first brick house in the town was built by William King about 1802 or 1803.

The first stores or mercantile houses were on the south side of Main street, and the tavern (it was not a hotel) was located on the eastern slope of the hill and north side of Main street. There was one notable "house of entertainment" on the south side of Main street kept by a fiddler named Fin. There the plain people took their meals and lodged, and there the hard drinkers congregated. Fin played the "fiddle," and many uproarious jig dances were performed under the inspiration of Fin's "Fisher's Hornpipe" and similar dance music. Tact and management were exercised by Fin, and his house was never regarded as a nuisance, and so conservative and

respectful was his conduct that he kept the esteem of the better class of the citizens.

The white man's inn was kept by a Mr. Saul. Mrs. James Preston's house occupies the site of this once famous hostelry. It was a rambling frame building of a story and a half, and the rooms were small and badly ventilated. But the host, a small, round-shouldered man, a little deaf, was as spry and quick as a Scotch terrier, and did all he could to make his guests comfortable and satisfied. His chief assistants were three buxom daughters, one of whom was Miss Maria, the beauty of the family. Mrs. Saul was fat and rarely appeared among the guests.

Attached to the rear of the house was a long dining-room, and in it were given the *balls* (dances) of the period, the occasional shows of jugglers, or other indoor amusements. The dances were attended by the young people from many miles around, and the frolic lasted into the wee hours of the morning.

Round dances were not then known, but the cotillon and reels were enough for the enjoyment of the young people of that primitive age. As the dancing master boarded at the house, the Misses Saul were taught gratuitously, but it was Miss Maria whose beauty and grace made her the belle of many a ball. She married a southern planter, I believe, and passed beyond our horizon like the evening star.

Among the other belles of the period were the Misses Sanders from near Chilhowie, one of whom, now over ninety years old, is the only survivor, and Miss Smythe, daughter of Pleasant Smythe, and Miss Mary Byars (a

beauty), and others of that neighborhood. Of the beauties of the town the most conspicuous was Miss Sally Beckam, who married William King, Jr. There were others, but the veil of propriety and age shut them from the public eye.

At an early period Abingdon became the commercial center of the district, and sold goods by the wholesale and retail to the smaller dealers in the adjoining counties of Tazewell, Russell, Scott and Lee, in Virginia, and the border counties of North Carolina and Tennessee.

Much the larger part of the trade was in barter, *i. e.*, an exchange of country products for such articles as were needed for consumption or sale. The large warehouses and the upper stories of merchants' houses were filled with these country products. Great piles of goose-feathers occupied one compartment, the bagging of which for the eastern cities was a frolic for the young men of the establishment and their friends. Heaps of ginseng occupied other places, and the ceiling was festooned by strings of this root hung up to dry. Kegs of beeswax and jars of honey had their places, and cured hams, sides, and other meats were piled about in convenient places for packing. The shelves of the stores, also, held contributions from the labor products of the times, such as rolls of flax and tow linen, plain and twilled, much used for towels, table cloths, etc., and also for outward and under garments of both sexes, and for many other domestic purposes. To these should be added country woven jeans and linsey, and woollen socks knit by the country women.



This mass of barter, after supplying the home market, was sent in wagons to the eastern cities, and supplied return loads to those four- and six-horse teams that were the "inland ships" of the period. Nearly every farmer had a "plat" of flax and hemp, and all the appliances for breaking, "scutching" (?) and hackling flax and hemp. In the largest room of the house were the big and little wheels for spinning wool and flax. In an outer room was the loom, where the yarn and thread were woven into cloth.

To the buzz of these wheels, as the spinner moved backward and forward, drawing out and winding up the yarn on the big wheel, or sat moving with her foot the rapid-turning flax wheel, was added the music of the voice, singing a spirited hymn or favorite ditty.

Alas! how greatly the habits of our rural population have changed! The lots for cultivating flax and hemp are devoted to other crops, and the smooth, clean area where the flax and hemp were spread for the woody fibre to be rotted has disappeared. The spinning wheels fall to pieces in out-houses, and the wood of the loom has furnished fuel for fires. The sweet contented home circle is broken up, and the young men and maidens, when their school days are over, scatter in every direction, seeking employment. The work of the homestead and farm have lost their charm, and the question arises, are the country people better and more contented by the change?

At the northeast slope of the hill on which the court-house is situated there is a cave which has been explored as far as underneath the court-house. The opening to it is on the lot of James L. White, and there a clear stream



of water rushes by, making an admirable and cool dairy. In the lot now owned by Mrs. Eliza Mitchell, and formerly an appendage of the Saul's tavern, there is a *well* passing through the cave and into the stream below. The water was drawn by a bucket, and to protect and guide it to the water a cylinder was fastened to the floor of the cave. A boys' school at one time was not far off, and one of the tricks of the mischievous was to go into the cave as far as the well, watch for the descending bucket, and gently divert it to the exterior of the cylinder. The fun was to watch the wrath of the cook or old hostler as he ran to the mouth of the cave to catch the intruder. This was never done, as a signal corps was on the alert and gave timely warning.

Some of the earliest records of Washington county and Abingdon were lost or burned when the town was burned by a raiding party of Federal soldiers in 1864. This party was headed by a renegade named Wyatt.

Fortunately, there were a few Confederates on furlough in the town and vicinity, and they, quickly organizing, the Federal banditti were driven off. Wyatt was shot by Mr. Findlay, of Mississippi, as he turned from Main street towards the Protestant Methodist church, and fell from his horse near it; was carried into the Stone-wall Jackson Institute, where he died soon afterwards.

The first Board of Trustees was organized in January, 1785. They were William Edmiston, Robert Craig, James Armstrong, Robert Preston, and Robert Campbell. This board continued in office with few changes for several years. At a meeting of the board on the 4th of October, 1798, Andrew Russell was appointed secretary of the

board. Just when he came to Abingdon is not known, but as clerk of the Superior Court he was recognized as one of the best and kindest of men and faithful, efficient officers to the time of his death.

The first "*jail*" was built by Abraham Goodpasture in 1787, and was located in the rear of the court-house, and quite near it. It was probably built of hewed logs. It was superseded by an order of court on the 20th day of March, 1799, that William King, James Armstrong, John Eppler and Robert Craig, or any three of them, report to the next court the plan of a stone prison and the probable expense of building the same, and that the money and bonds arising from the sale of lots after former appropriations are discharged, together with the money borrowed by Andrew Russell from this court be applied to building the said prison, and the balance of the expense be levied on the tithable persons of the county. That stone prison remained for many years. James White was "the undertaker for building the stone jail," at a cost of \$1,110.05, about 1801. But on the 6th of May, 1804, the town of Abingdon did not have money enough to pay his order for £24-2-11. The proximity of the jail to the court-house was an annoyance, and its capacity for accommodating the increased number of criminals of progressive civilization and population too limited. The new jail at the corner of Valley and Court-house streets has modern improvements, and is much larger.

On the 13th of January, 1803, the Legislature passed an act authorizing the trustees of the town of Abingdon to raise by lottery a sum not exceeding \$2,000, for the

purpose of purchasing a library, philosophical and mathematical apparatus, and anything else necessary for the use of the academy.\*

The scheme for carrying out this purpose was entrusted to Andrew Russell, Jacob Hamilton and James White.

If the writer is not mistaken the lottery was a failure, and neither the library nor "anything else" was purchased for the academy. On May 3, 1803, the by-laws of the trustees were adopted, and these gentlemen were present: Andrew Russell, William King, James White, Michael Deckard, John McClellan, Jonathan Smith, William Trigg and David Campbell.

Of these nine influential and trusted men the descendants of but two perpetuate their names as citizens of Abingdon, and they are James White and William Trigg.

After a lapse of eight years the name of another conspicuous citizen appears on the records as a trustee—that of Benjamin Estell, the able lawyer, attorney for the Commonwealth, and judge of the Circuit Court.

On the 11th of June, 1811, the act was passed imposing a fine of one dollar for fighting or rioting in the streets. In default of payment the offender should be confined in the stocks for two hours. The writer remembers when these "stocks" stood on the western side of the courthouse, and seeing offenders confined in them. They consisted of a platform some five or six feet above the ground. The center stanchion reached to seven feet

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\* This Academy was founded by William King in 1803 and chartered by act of incorporation January 13, 1803, and still stands as a monument to his memory. See Appendix A. B.

above the platform. To this were attached movable boards, one at the foot of and another about four feet above the platform. In these boards were holes, through which the head, hands and feet of the culprit were thrust. It was no easy position to be confined to for an hour. One experience generally deterred offenders from a repetition of the experiment.

A similar fine and penalty were imposed for running a horse on the street, and a fine of fifty cents for shooting horizontally in any lot. These "orders" of the trustees contributed a great deal to the quiet and safety of the citizens. Before their passage such offences were frequent, as the old inhabitants testified.

The early provisions against the spread of fire should not be omitted. Every householder was required to have a fireman's bucket for every male adult of his establishment, free or slave, and a ladder long enough to reach to the eaves of his house. It was the duty of the town sergeant periodically to visit every house and see that this order was executed, and a fine of fifty cents was imposed on every delinquent, and repeated if the order were not promptly obeyed. In case of fire every able-bodied citizen was required, under the same penalty to come with his bucket and fall into the line for passing the buckets from the nearest supply of water to the conflagration. Perhaps some of those fire-buckets have been kept as mementoes of the past by the descendants of the old inhabitants.

The annals of the city are silent during the turbulent period of the war of 1812-'14, and nothing was deemed of sufficient importance to be noted until 1828.

In the meanwhile the town had grown, and several



“plants” (to use a modern phrase) for manufacturing and other purposes had been established. Of them was that of Peter Henritze for the manufacture of hats. He made not only the soft wool hats worn by the country people, boys and slaves, but an imitation of the fashionable silk “stove-pipe hat” of the period. His establishment, therefore, furnished a market for the peltry of all fur-bearing animals. Henritze’s place was on Main street, on the east side of the ravine that crosses the street at the foot of the western hill, and nearly opposite the Episcopal church. To dry his wares an inclined platform was erected facing and close to the sidewalk of Main street. The odor of fresh peltry and newly-dried hats pervaded the streets, and this, with the variegated platform, so frightened horses from the country that it was often difficult to force them to pass it.

The merchants also dealt in skins, and on the front of their store-houses bear and buffalo skins were hung, as well as festoons of gay-colored calicoes. These also frightened country horses, and much vexed the good people of the community. To abate this nuisance, and remove all difficulty of access to the town and preserve the quiet of the streets, the trustees on the 9th of May, 1828, passed an order forbidding all persons from drying hats or exposing bear skins or merchandise on Main street. In front of every store there was a railing with hooks to fasten horses, and at nearly every dwelling-house one or more hitching posts. On court-days these railings were crowded with horses, and sometimes when a sudden gust of wind blew and the skins and calicoes rattled and flapped bridles were broken, and there was a stampede

of horses through the streets, dangerous alike to man and beast.

At the same meeting the ordinances were passed forbidding all persons to throw water or filth into the streets or alleys or to play the game of long-bullets in the streets or alleys. The fine for each offence was fifty cents.

This game of long-bullets is among the things of the past. At that time it was a favorite game with the boys of the academy, and as they returned towards town, if the road was smooth, they jerked those iron balls of one and a half inches in diameter upon it all the way. The effort was to keep the balls in the beaten track and see how far they could be made to roll. The greatest skill was to make the ball skim over the surface and lose no momentum by bouncing. They were jerked by a sweep of the arm along the side, and not thrown from the shoulder. It was also a favorite game with the young men of the village. The force of one of these balls jerked by a stout boy or man would have endangered the limbs or life of a child, and inflicted serious injury on man or beast.

The trustees who signed these revised by-laws of May 9, 1828, were Andrew Russell (principal trustee), Augustus Oury, John M. Preston, M. Shaver, and Jacob Lynch. These names are guarantees of conservatism and good order, and their reputation lingers as the foundation of past prosperity.

Of Andrew Russell mention has been made. Augustus Oury was postmaster and remarkable for the rapidity and accuracy with which he handled the large mail daily or nightly delivered for assortment and delivery. At



that time Abingdon was the distributing office for the district, and to it came the mails for Russell, Tazewell and Scott in Virginia, and one or two of the border counties of North Carolina. To these points, as well as to the small offices of Washington county, it was carried on horseback or two-horse hacks.

When the mail coach arrived from the east or west, and the driver threw out the heavy mail-bags, they were seized by one of the deputies (there were five or six of them), and thrown into a large room lined with boxes. The contents were emptied upon the floor, where the assorting was done, and every package and letter thrown into its appropriate box. Then followed the distribution into the mail-bags for the different offices. It was a busy scene in this big room, as watched through the window by boys and men as they waited for their mail.

John M. Preston was one of the most successful merchants; a man of spotless integrity and the purest moral character. His descendants are proud of their inheritance, for his name is a synonym for honesty.

Michael Shaver was a silversmith, and repaired and regulated the watches and clocks of the community. He began life as a blacksmith, and in early manhood indulged in the then fashionable amusement of cock-fighting, and was as ready for a fight as his own games. But he joined the Presbyterian church, and thenceforth was an exemplary member of it, and won the esteem of his fellow-citizens by his manly and consistent conduct. A story is told of him that may illustrate one of the peculiarities of that section of the country at that time. The

currency was almost exclusively of Spanish silver coins of one dollar, divided in halves, quarters, eighths and sixteenths. The last was worth six and a quarter ( $6\frac{1}{4}$ ) cents, and was called fourpence. The next was worth twelve and a half ( $12\frac{1}{2}$ ) cents, and designated ninepence. There were no copper cents in circulation—not enough to make change for anything under six and a quarter cents, and as the coins of this value were scarce the people resorted to the device of cutting the ninepence coins in half. These halves passed readily as fourpence half penny (pronounced *fopensapenny*). A country lad brought the two halves of one of these  $12\frac{1}{2}$ -cent pieces to Mr. Shaver, and asked him if he could put them securely together. It was court-day. Mr. Shaver said, “Yes, he could,” but that he was very busy, and could not do so on that day. The lad was very urgent, and as he had to return home that evening, begged Mr. Shaver to do that small job for him. “Very well,” said Mr. Shaver, “I will have it ready when you call this afternoon.” The lad called, and, sure enough, there lay the mended ninepence, bright and strong. “How much do you charge for mending it?” asked the lad. “Twenty-five cents,” replied Mr. Shaver. “Why, it’s only a ninepence, Mr. Shaver,” answered the lad. “That is true, but my work on it is worth twenty-five cents,” Mr. Shaver replied. After a pause the lad said, “Will you take the mended ninepence for half pay?” “No; it’s a counterfeit,” replied Mr. Shaver. The lad paid the twenty-five cents, and left with well-bought experience.

The last signer of the revised by-laws was Jacob Lynch. In size he was almost a dwarf, but of a trim and sym-

metrical figure, not much over five feet, if so much. He began life as a deputy clerk under David Campbell, afterwards Governor of Virginia, and succeeded him in the clerkship, holding it till his death.

Mr. Lynch had his peculiarities. One of these was to wear always a high hat and high-heeled shoes. These apparently added to his stature. He was punctuality personified, so that those who lived on the way between his home and his office, knew the time of day by his passing. His handwriting was round and clear, and almost as plain as print. He therefore wrote slowly and carefully. The records kept by him are models of neatness and accuracy. His deliberation was sometimes trying to impatient waiters for papers, but he could not be hurried, and he was too self-possessed and even-tempered to be flurried by importunities. His even temper, good sense, and spotless probity won and secured for him the esteem and confidence of the community.

Five years after the adoption of the revised statutes, on June 13, 1833, an ordinance was passed requiring the owners of lots on Main street to furnish curb-stones along the line of their property. This was necessary, not only to prevent the spread of the rock for macadamizing and the grading then just begun, but also to support the sidewalks, which were to be *paved*.

These long-needed improvements changed the aspect of the street, and removed many of its peculiarities, some of which were associated with the sweet memories of childhood and youth.

Tall Lombardy poplars bordered a part of the street

west of the court-house. They were removed, as well as other obstructions to the paving and grading.\*

To the south of the town is "King's Mountain." It was so named because of a fancied resemblance to the famous mountain in South Carolina, on which was fought the battle of October 7, 1781. The victory won there by the western mountaineers, *quorum magna pars*, were Washington county men, Mr. Jefferson said, turned the tide of war in favor of the United States and led Cornwallis to march to Yorktown, to his surrender there, and the end of the war.

There were many of the veterans of that campaign alive, and to rehearse the incidents of the contest and impress upon the minds of that generation the gallant and daring deeds of their ancestors a sham battle was fought at King's Mountain. The positions of the Revolutionary commanders were occupied by officers who were instructed (perhaps drilled) how to play their parts, and the English in red coats, with cannon and bayoneted muskets, occupied the crest of the hill. There was great firing of blank cartridges, charging up the hill, and retreat from the fixed bayonets of the British regulars, until Colonel Furgerson was killed and the white flag raised. In all this *melee* no fatal accident occurred and few casualties.†

On the northwest of Abingdon, about a quarter of a

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\* This grading and paving was done by John Keller, who often represented the county in the Legislature.

† An account of the sham battle was given me by my mother. General Francis Preston, my father, was one of the commanding officers. I do not know whom he represented.

mile beyond the grove the last fight with Indians in that vicinity occurred. The Rev. Charles Cummings, accompanied by his servant Job, and three neighbors, and Creswell driving the wagon, were attacked by them. Creswell was killed by the first fire of the Indians, and during the skirmish two of the neighbors were wounded. Mr. Cummings and his servants, who were well armed, drove the Indians from their ambush, and, with the aid of some men from Black's Fort, who, hearing the firing, came to their relief, brought in the dead and wounded. Creswell was the first person buried in the present graveyard, and a stone with his name and date of death roughly carved is yet standing.

The Rev. Mr. Cummings had as a neighbor James Piper. They thought their lands adjoined, but by some error in the survey a vacant strip was left between them. A very objectionable person discovered this fact, and took possession of the strip. Much annoyed by the proximity of this bad character, the Parson went to Mr. Piper and asked if there was any way of getting rid of him. Mr. Piper replied, "Don't give yourself any trouble about him. I'll get rid of him." Watching an opportunity when the man was absent, Mr. Piper entered his cabin, drew a large circle in the center of the floor, put in it queer figures and cabalistic signs, and sprinkled the center with finely-cut black horse-hair. Next morning the cabin was vacant, and no more was heard of the troublesome intruder.

With James Bradley's residence a mile west of Abingdon, across Wolf creek, there is associated one of those psychological incidents not yet explained in our philoso-



phy, and which startle the incredulous by the testimony of unimpeachable witnesses. I tell the tale as it was told to a little group of students, of which were Lilburn H. Trigg (a native of Abingdon) and myself, by Aaron Lindsey, of Mississippi. I am truly sorry that the names of the parties are forgotten. Apropos of the topic of conversation, Mr. Lindsey said, "A similar incident occurred in (say) Jacksonville. A young merchant married the daughter of a wealthy citizen of the place, and within a few weeks afterwards started for Philadelphia for a new stock of goods. But a little while before he was expected to return the young bride became anxious and depressed. She was laughed at by the family for pining after her husband, but as the depression deepened, everything was done to divert her mind and cheer her spirits. She said she was sure that her husband was sick, and her heart and mind were filled with the most gloomy apprehensions.

One morning soon after breakfast, when she appeared more depressed than usual, she went up-stairs to her chamber. Soon after entering it she was heard to fall on the floor. The family hastened to her, and found that she had fainted, and was lying on the floor. Restoratives were administered and the first words she uttered on regaining consciousness were, "My husband is dead, and not a friend was with him. I saw him die." Then, covering her face with her hands, she said in tones of deepest anguish, "I see the room in which he died, and the house and everything about it." The family endeavored to sooth and persuade her that this was only the effect of nervous depression, as they themselves believed it to be.

But nothing shook her conviction of the truth of the vision. "Oh," she would say, "I see it all; the little chamber up-stairs in a brick house, close by the road, with a window looking over a porch, and in front a rocky hill with a double log-barn upon it, and near by a creek where there is a tilt-hammer. Oh, I see it all, and my dear husband dead and alone."

At this point of the story Lindsey turned to Trigg and myself and said, "I have forgotten the name of the man who lived there. You fellows ought to know, for it is not far from your town." We almost simultaneously answered, "It is Bradley's." "Yes," said Lindsey, "that is the name."

So inconsolable was the bride, that her brother decided to look up the bridegroom, taking the road by which he would return. When he arrived at Bradley's he was so impressed with the resemblance of the place in all its details to the description given by his sister, that he dismounted, and on meeting Mr. Bradley, asked if there had been a sick man from Mississippi stopping with him. "Yes," Mr. Bradley replied; "he came here sick and died in the room up-stairs. I wrote to his family, but have not received an answer. All his effects and money I have kept safely." On a comparison of the dates it was ascertained that the man died at the hour his bride fainted at her home in Mississippi. From the window of the upper chamber the scene is identically the same as that described by the disconsolate bride. It is needless to add that she had never been in that part of Virginia.

The sequel to this imperfect sketch of the ancient and interesting village of Abingdon I leave to younger and

abler hands. I am the oldest living native-born of the town, and of my boyhood associates and school-fellows only one survives, and that is David C. Cummings. We were born on the same day of the same month and year—November 20, 1812.

I remember, I remember,  
The house where I was born;  
The little window where the sun  
Came peeping in at morn.  
He never came a wink too soon,  
Or brought too long a day;  
But now I often wish the night  
Had borne my breath away.

I remember, I remember,  
The poplars straight and high,  
I used to think their slender tops  
Were close against the sky.  
It was a childish ignorance,  
But now 'tis little joy  
To know I'm farther off from Heaven  
Than when I was a boy.

—Hood.

## COLONEL WILLIAM PRESTON.

Colonel William Preston was the son of John Preston and Elizabeth Patton Preston, and was born in Donegal, Ireland, on the 25th of December, 1729. His parents came to America about 1737,\* with three daughters, and this one son, then in his eighth year.

He often spoke of his voyage to his children, and of incidents which he well remembered. His parents came directly to Augusta county, Virginia, and were domiciled for four or five years with Colonel James Patton, the brother of Mrs. John Preston.

After the death of John Preston, in January, 1747,† the care of the family devolved upon William, then a lad of seventeen, and he was employed to post the books of some of the merchants in Staunton. Such employment shows the home training of this youth, for "the school-

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\* This date (1737) is established by the fact that William Preston was "in his eighth year," as affirmed by General Francis Preston, the second son of William Preston, in memoranda left for his family. All who have written about the family from John Mason Brown and James A. Waddell, to the Hon. William E. Robertson, have made this mistake. All of them were misled by the fact that John Preston proved his importation in 1740. This was done when he wished to buy the tract of land on which he settled after leaving Colonel Patton's, where he had resided since his arrival in America.

† This date is fixed by the fact that his wife qualified as executrix February 6, 1747.

master was not then abroad," and elementary education was given by the parents. It also shows home influence upon character. Few lads of his age would have acquired sufficient knowledge of arithmetic and book-keeping for such duty, or have established a character for steadiness and integrity for so responsible a position. Colonel Patton, soon after being domiciled with Mr. Preston, appreciated the moral and intellectual merits of his nephew, and sent him to be more liberally educated to the Rev. John Craig, a Presbyterian preacher and classical scholar. At that early period of life such was William Preston's piety, that the family thought of dedicating him to the ministry, but Mr. Craig decided that he was too old to begin the studies thought necessary for so learned and responsible a vocation. At that time (as always) "life was real, and the youths of the frontier had to be up and doing."

William Preston's widowed mother and his three sisters were to be cared for, and he was apparently their stay and support. There was, however, another closely connected with the family who was watching with affectionate interest the development of this youth, and that was his uncle, Colonel James Patton. He was at that time a rich and prominent man in Augusta county, and had large enterprises in contemplation, and no doubt looked upon this steady, manly and sensible nephew as his future confidential secretary and companion. His education, therefore, was made a practical one, and yet such was the influence of Mr. Craig that it imbued his mind with a love of literature and intellectual cultivation that was fostered through life, and prompted the efforts



to use every available means of educating his numerous family.

William Preston learned surveying under Mr. Craig, and soon after leaving that instructor, to acquire better knowledge of the practical business of life, he accepted the deputy sheriffalty from William Estell, High Sheriff of Augusta county.

He could not have held that office very long, as we find that he accompanied his uncle, Colonel Patton, as private secretary when he (Colonel Patton) went as commissioner to make a treaty with the Indians at Log Town, sixteen miles below Pittsburg.\* Under the instruction from Governor Dinwiddie, dated December 13, 1751, Colonel Patton was to proceed immediately to Fredericksburg, "and there receive from Mr. Strother the goods sent as a present by his Majesty to the Indians, and provide everything necessary for the gentlemen appointed as commissioners on behalf of this government." The treaty was concluded June 13, 1752.

The appointment by Colonel Patton of William Preston as his private secretary on so important a commission, shows the confidence of the uncle in the capacity and fidelity of the nephew of twenty-two years. A still more striking evidence of Colonel Patton's affection for and confidence in this nephew is that in his will, executed September 1, 1750, when William Preston was only twenty-one years old, he, with John Buchanan and William Thompson, were appointed executors.

In 1755, Colonel Patton was accompanied by William

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\* *Annals of Augusta County*, p. 48.

Preston on his tour of inspection of the lands he and his agents had located, and many of which had been surveyed. They stopped at "Draper's Meadows" (afterwards Smithfield near Blacksburg) with William Ingles and the Drapers to rest from the fatigues of the journey, and also for the restoration of Colonel Patton's health.

On Sunday, the 8th of June, 1755, a party of Indians which had hidden in the ripe wheat near by rushed upon the unprotected settlers. Colonel Patton was sitting at a table writing, with his broad sword by his side, and when the Indians rushed in upon him he killed two of them, but was shot dead by those outside.

Colonel Patton's will was admitted to probate at the November term of the Court in 1756.

William Preston was then (1755) nearly twenty-five years old, and the disturbed condition of the country demanded the services of the best men for the protection of the frontier against Indian raids and massacres. William Preston soon raised a company, and was a captain of volunteers in 1756, and was ordered by Governor Dinwiddie to join Major Andrew Lewis in his expedition against the Shawnees at the mouth of Big Sandy river. This expedition was planned by Governor Dinwiddie in 1755.\* It was not, however, a success, and the difficulty of procuring supplies for the troops and the rugged sterility of the country led to such insubordination that the expedition was abandoned and the troops disbanded.

A similar expedition was undertaken eleven years afterwards, in the summer of 1767. An account of it is

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\* Annals of Augusta County, p. 81.

given by Mrs. Letitia Floyd, daughter of William Preston, in her letters to her son, Benjamin Rush Floyd, written at the request of Lyman C. Draper. I quote from a copy of this manuscript:

“The summer of 1767 Colonel Preston had been appointed commissioner to hold a treaty with the Shawanes and Delaware Indians at the mouth of the Big Sandy river, a branch of the Ohio. Colonel Thomas Lewis, of Rockingham county, was likewise a commissioner. Lewis, I believe, did not accompany the party. The treaty was made, I think, with Ocanothota (?), who was very old, and a chief called Cornstalk.

“On their return from the mouth of the Sandy they pursued a fork of the river which was through a very rugged region, got so entirely out of food as to be compelled to eat the buffalo tugs which tied on their packs, and hence the stream was named by Colonel Preston the Tug Fork of Sandy.”

In “the partial list of delegates from Augusta in the House of Burgesses,” furnished Mr. Joseph A. Waddill by Dr. R. A. Brock, there is a gap of five years, from 1752 to 1757, and it is probable that within that period William Preston and John Buchanan were elected, as stated by Mrs. Floyd, who states that the year after their election Preston was requested by the congregation of Episcopalians of Staunton to procure a carpenter to undertake the building of a church in that town. Francis Smith, who lived near Hanover Courthouse, a rich carpenter and contractor, was applied to. He had a beautiful daughter, Susanna, who was educated by the Rev. Patrick Henry. She married William Preston the

17th of July, 1761.\* After the birth of their first child, Elizabeth (who married Mr. William S. Maddison), born 31st May, 1762, William Preston removed from Staunton to Greenfield, about five miles west of Fincastle, and a mile from Amsterdam, in Botetourt county. This was, and is, a valuable estate, and is still in the possession of his descendants, the present owner being Alfred Preston.

The next year (1763), "having some business in "Augusta county" (I quote from Mrs. Floyd's letters), "in "the month of May he left his family (wife and child) at "Greenfield. Early in the morning Mrs. Preston was "startled by the firing of two guns in quick succession at "a neighbor's house, within a half mile of hers. Very "shortly afterwards Mr. Joseph Cloyd rode up on his "plough-horse with the gears on, telling her that the "Indians had killed his brother John, and had shot at "him, but missed him, although his shirt was powder-"burnt. They had gone to the house, and he expected "had killed his mother. Mrs. Preston sent a young man "living at her house to Captain Francis Smith, who com-"manded a small fort on Craig creek, to bring his troops "to pursue the Indians. She wrote a letter to him which "was free from tremble or trepidation. She then sent a "white man and two negro men to Mr. Cloyd's, where "they found Mrs. Cloyd tomahawked in three places, all "the household destroyed, and the money carried off (Mr.

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\* There is a tradition in the family that Preston met Miss Smith whilst he was a member of the House of Burgesses. If this be so, it explains why he went so far as Hanover Courthouse to find a carpenter, and also goes to confirm Mrs. Floyd's statement that William Preston and John Buchanan were members of the House before 1761.

“Cloyd had a large sum of money stored away). Mrs. Cloyd was perfectly in her senses; told all the circumstances of the savage revelry in getting drunk and ripping up the feather beds, and one of them, taking up a cob and wiping off the blood from her temples, exclaiming, ‘Poor old woman!’ She died the next morning.”\*

This account of the murder of Mrs. Cloyd is a clue to and explains a fragment of a letter which was probably written by Colonel William Preston to his brother-in-law, the Rev. John Brown, and preserved by Colonel John Mason Brown, of Kentucky, and it throws some light upon the state of the times. The letter is dated Greenfield, 27th July, 1763. The writer says, “Our situation at present is very different from what it was when we had the pleasure of your company. All the valleys of Roanoke river and the waters of the Mississippi are depopulated, except Captain English (Ingles), and a few families on New river, who have built a fort, among whom are Mr. Thompson and his family. They intend to make a stand till some assistance be sent them. Seventy-five of the Bedford militia went out in order to pursue the enemy, but I hear the officers and part of the men are gone home, and the rest gone to Reed creek to help in James Davies and two or three families there that dare not venture to travel.

“I have built a little fort in which are eighty-seven

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\* Mrs. Floyd does not give the date of the massacre of Mrs. Cloyd, but as no mention of a fort or stockade at Greenfield is made, the presumption is that it occurred in May, 1762.



persons, twenty of whom bear arms. We are in a pretty good position of defence, and, with the aid of God, are determined to make a stand. In five or six other places of this part of the country they have fallen into the same method, and with the same resolution. How long we may keep them is uncertain. 'No enemy has appeared here as yet. Their guns are frequently heard, and their footing observed, which makes us believe they will pay us a visit. My two sisters and their families are here, and all in good health. We bear our misfortunes so far with \* \* \* \* and are in great hopes of being relieved. I have a thousand things \* \* \* Captain Christian can't wait. I give you joy.' "

The asterisks indicate part of the letter torn out.

From this letter some idea of the condition of the western frontier of Virginia is gained, and it shows the intelligent and generous care taken of the people of that section by William Preston. The fort about his house was doubtless built at his own expense, and was not only large enough to protect his own family, but to shelter "eighty-seven persons, twenty of whom bear arms."

It also shows the heroism of that young wife with an infant not yet two years old. Few women in so exposed and dangerous a situation could have written a letter "free from tremble and trepidation." It may be presumed that she knew of the Indian raid into the settlement of the James river in 1761, and of the massacres and the captives they took. Among them was Mrs. Hannah Dennis, whose escape and return home is surpassed in

resolution and hardship only by that of Mrs. Draper. (Howe's Hist. of Va., p. 20.)

During the next five years William Preston, with others, was fully occupied in protecting the frontier settlements.\* It has been stated that in the summer of 1767 he was a commissioner to make a treaty with Indians at the mouth of Big Sandy river. In the year 1768-'69 he was elected with John Wilson a member of the House of Burgesses, and there he probably became acquainted with the leading statesmen of the period.

He had met and become acquainted with General Washington as early as 1755 on the latter's visit to the forts of the west. On the 22d of December, 1769, Mr. Preston was commissioned colonel by Governor Dinwiddie.

Botetourt county was formed from Augusta in 1769, and he was one of the first justices of the county. At the first term of the court (February, 1770) he qualified as surveyor, coroner, excheator and colonel of militia. Fin-castle county was formed from Botetourt in 1772, and embraced all the country west belonging to, or claimed by, Virginia, which included Kentucky. Colonel Preston then decided to move into the new county, and took possession of Draper's Meadows, which he named

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\* The sad condition of the Western frontiers of Virginia, the inefficiency and insubordination of the militia, and the absence of combination among the settlers are fully and vividly detailed by General Washington in his letters of that period to Governor Dinwiddie, and need only be referred to.

Smithfield, in compliment to his wife. On this excursion he was accompanied by John Floyd.

I quote from Mrs. Floyd's letters: "During Colonel Preston's residence at Greenfield, in 1770, a young gentleman by the name of John Floyd was introduced to him by Colonel Joseph Cabell, of Rockingham county, as very well qualified to fill the post of deputy in the surveyor's office. It was always a rule with Colonel Preston to require every young man who was employed in his office to teach school six months at least, thereby finding out his temper, diligence and trustworthiness. Breckinridges, Smiths and my sisters and brothers constituted Floyd's school."

The pupils of the Rev. John Craig and the Rev. Patrick Henry were too appreciative of the advantages of education not to use every available means of imparting it to their children and inculcating in them a love of reading and intellectual cultivation.

I quote again from Mrs. Floyd's letters: "Colonel Preston, Colonel Thomas Lewis of Rockingham, General Andrew Lewis of Botetourt, Mr. John Madison, and Colonel Fleming of Augusta, engaged a Mr. Gabriel Jones, an Englishman, to select for them libraries in London. This Mr. Jones was Mr. Jefferson's first partner in the practice of law. A good selection of the classics, ancient history, the distinguished poets of England, the dictionary of arts and sciences—a sort of encyclopedia—constituted the libraries. I would observe that the use of these books gave to each family possessing them a station which outranked very many wealthier families than the above named."

In the autumn of that year (1773) Colonel Preston and Colonel Nathaniel Gist were appointed to make a treaty with the Cherokees, and, I think, the Chickamaugas, at Long Island on the Holston river, in the State of Tennessee. The treaty was made, and the southern Indians were perfectly quiet. In the March of 1774 Colonel Preston removed my mother and her children to Smithfield. There was a fort or stockade around the house. Several of the neighbors' families came into it for safety because the northwestern Indians made constant attempts on the settlements. John Taylor, who had married a niece of Colonel Buchanan, brought his family. Mr. Robert Preston,\* Captain James Charlton, his brother Wash., and Captain John Lucas were mainly the persons who defended the fort.

I make these extracts from Mrs. Floyd's letter to show the authority for the facts stated. She wrote from memory, 'tis true, and sometimes made mistakes in dates, but her recollection of family incidents and history was clear and vivid. After her marriage she lived within a mile of Smithfield at "Solitude" (now a property of Blacksburg College), and by this proximity to her mother, learned more of the family history than the other members of the family.

In the summer and autumn of 1774 there was serious troubles with the Indians northwest of the mountains of Virginia and along the Ohio river, and war was

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\* This Robert Preston was the father of John Preston, of Washington County, who married the youngest daughter of Colonel Preston. They left a large family; the Sheffeyes of Smythe are descendants of one of the daughters.

imminent. Governor Dinwiddie and General Andrew Lewis were with their respective commands marching towards the Ohio river. Colonel Preston was detained at home by the dangerous illness of his wife, but there was work for him in his official capacity to do at home, as is evidenced by the following letter, dated only twelve days before the battle of Point Pleasant. It is to be regretted that the entire letter was not given:

Extract from American Archives (4 Series IV., page 808) of a letter from Colonel William Preston, dated Fin-castle, September 28, 1774:

That part of the army under the command of Colonel Lewis which is to meet Lord Dunmore at the mouth of the Great Kanhawa or New river, assembled at the Great Levels of Greenbrier to the amount of above fifteen hundred rank and file. Colonel Charles Lewis marched with six hundred men on the 6th instant for the mouth of Elk, a branch of New river, which empties some distance below the falls, there to build a small fort and prepare canoes. Colonel Andrew Lewis marched with another large party the 12th instant for the same place, and Colonel Christian was to march yesterday with the remainder, being about four hundred, and the last supply of provisions. This body of militia being mostly armed with rifle-guns and a great part of them good woodsmen, are looked upon to be at least equal to any troops for the number that have been raised in America. It is earnestly hoped that they will, in conjunction with the other party, be able to chastise the Ohio Indians for the many murders and robberies they have committed on the frontiers for many years past.



On the 8th instant, one John Henry was dangerously wounded and his wife and three children taken prisoners on the head of Clinch river. The man at that time made his escape, but is since dead of wounds. The same day a man was taken prisoner by another party of the enemy on the north fork of Holston. On the 13th a soldier was fired upon by three Indians on Clinch river, but as he received no hurt, he returned the fire, and it is believed killed an Indian, as much blood was found where he fell, and one of the plugs which burst out of the wound was also found. The soldier was supported by some men who were near, and gave the two Indians a chase, who, it is supposed, threw the wounded one into a deep pit which was near. The parties of the enemy were pursued several days by Captain Daniel Smith, who could not overtake them, they having stolen horses to carry them off.

On the 23d two negroes were taken prisoners at Blackmore's Fort, on Clinch river, and a good many horses and cattle shot down. On the 24th a family was killed and taken on Reedy creek, a branch of Holston, near the Cherokee line, and on Sunday morning, the 25th, hallooing and the report of many guns were heard at several houses, but the damage done was not known when the express came away. These last murders are believed to be perpetrated by the Cherokees, as two men lately returned from that country and made oath that two parties had left the towns, either to join the Shawanees or fall upon some of our settlements; and that the Cherokees in general appeared in a very bad temper, which greatly alarmed the traders.

It is impossible to conceive the consternation into

which this last stroke has put the inhabitants on Holston and Clinch rivers, and that rather as many of their choice men are on the expedition, and they have no ammunition. Two of these people were at my house this day, and, after traveling above an hundred miles, offered ten shillings a pound for powder; but there is none to be had for any money. Indeed, it is very alarming, for should the Cherokees engage in a war at this time it would ruin us, as so many men are out, and ammunition so scarce. Add to this the strength of these people, and their towns being so near our settlements on Holston.

-From its contents it may be inferred that his letter was an official report either to the Executive or some superior officer. The account given of the condition of the country confirms the inference as to the consequences to Virginia had General Lewis's army been defeated. The suspicion of Governor Dunmore's treachery and covert purpose to allow General Lewis's command to be defeated, not only pervaded the officers, but men under his command, as is manifest from their declaration at the mouth of Hockhocking on the 5th of November, 1774, that "as the love of liberty and attachment to the real interests and just rights of America outweigh every other consideration we resolve that we will exert every power within us for the defence of American liberty and for the support of her just rights and privileges."

This "declaration," it may fairly be presumed, was intended not only as a rebuke to Governor Dunmore, but a warning of what were the sentiments of the people west of the mountains.\*

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\* John E. Cook refers to Colonel Stewart's journal of record in

Although Colonel Preston was much occupied by organizing defences of the western frontier against the Indians, he did not fail to inform himself about the condition of eastern Virginia and the other colonies of America. The air was resonant with angry rumors of British oppression from every quarter. Congress was in session at Philadelphia, and had distributed its celebrated resolutions throughout the Colonies, sending them to the leading men of the counties of Virginia. It may be assumed from his acquaintance with General Washington and the prominent members of Congress, as well as from his official position—colonel of Fincastle county—that a copy was sent to Colonel Preston. He was a man of purpose and prompt action, and, with other prominent and influential gentlemen, soon called a meeting of the Freeholders of Fincastle county on the 20th of January, 1775, for which was drafted the proceedings given in the “*Historical Sketches and Reminiscences.*”

Before this event, or soon after, he sent John Floyd as his deputy surveyor to locate and survey lands on the Ohio river for Colonel Preston and himself. Floyd went to Point Pleasant, had a boat made and with his assistants descended the river as far as the falls. Near these, at the mouth of Bear Grass creek, he surveyed a tract of land (now within the corporation of Louisville), some portion of which is still owned by the descendants of Colonel Preston. Floyd was so long absent and unheard

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Giles County (and I have been told in Greenbrier also) in which Colonel Stewart states that General Lewis was “credibly informed” of Governor Dunmore’s intention to sacrifice his command. I have failed to get a copy of this journal.

T. L. P.

from that it was concluded he had been killed. But after encountering many dangers and hardships that few could have endured, he made his way home by Guyandotte and up New river.

As soon as the Declaration of Independence was promulgated, Colonel Preston, as colonel of the county, acted as the military commandant, and no longer as colonel in his Majesty's service. His position exposed him to covert and open attacks from the Tories, who infested the mountains of Virginia and North Carolina. They were, in the beginning of the war, bold and aggressive, and often threatened the lives of the Whig military officers, especially those of the zealous Whigs, such as Colonel Preston and William Campbell.

Their raids upon the settlements were dreaded almost as much as those of the Indians, for they were led by and composed of the lowest and most vicious class of society. To defend himself, his family, and his Whig neighbors against these, and to guard the frontiers against the Indians required all the energy and intelligence of such an officer as Colonel Preston. How well he discharged those arduous duties history has not recorded, and probably never will do so, as most of his papers have been destroyed, and he had no Homer to sing his praise. They were appreciated at the time by a grateful people, and spoken of with praise by their descendants for more than one generation.

The lead mines in Wythe county were much coveted by the Tories, for the principal supply of lead for that section of country was obtained from there. Frequent attempts were made by the Tories to get possession of

them, one of which was by so formidable a body of men that Colonel Preston called upon Colonel William Campbell for assistance, and, in conjunction with Colonel Crockett, they defeated the Tories, dispersing and driving them into North Carolina. The Cherokees and other tribes of southern Indians, tampered with by the English, continued to threaten and make inroads upon the frontiers, and gave Colonel Preston and the other officers of that section full employment from 1776 to the close of the war. When the expedition against Colonel Furgerson was urged by Colonels Shelby and Sevier, Colonel William Campbell hesitated to join it, because his own home was threatened by Tories. As soon, however, as Colonel Preston's approval of it was known and concurred in by Colonel Arthur Campbell, Colonel William Campbell acquiesced, and was given command of the troops raised in Washington county.

The victory at King's Mountain so discouraged the Tories of the mountains on the borders of Virginia and North Carolina, that both Colonel Preston and Colonel Campbell promptly responded to the request of General Green to recruit his army with militia riflemen of Western Virginia. Their gallantry and efficiency at King's Mountain established their reputation. Colonel Preston being nearest, responded first to General Green with a force of over 300 men. Colonel Campbell soon followed with about sixty men.\* These riflemen were sent for—

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\* General Henry Lee (Lighthorse Harry) gives to Colonel William Campbell this number. He may have had a reason for it. (See Rev. David Schenck's *North Carolina, 1780-81*, account of the battle of Guilford Courthouse and p. 301. He, also, gives to Campbell's contingent 60 men.)



ward as skirmishers before the battle of Guilford Courthouse (March 15, 1781). They met the advance of Cornwallis's army at Whitsell's Mills, a short distance from General Green's position. "Colonel Preston was riding "a large, fiery horse that took fright at the report of the "guns, dashed through the mill pond, threw Colonel "Preston off, who was likely to be cut down by the "British Light Horse. At this critical moment, Colonel "Joseph Cloyd dismounted, put Colonel Preston on his "horse, and thereby saved his friend and officer's life. "Cloyd was the young man who escaped when his "brother and mother were killed near Greenfield." (See Mrs. Floyd's letters to her son.)

Colonel Preston's health had been precarious, and he was so exhausted by this accident that he was carried from the field, and his men were assigned to the command of Colonel William Campbell. For an account of how gallantly they fought, under the most difficult and trying circumstances, reference is again made to David Schenck's *North Carolina, 1780-'81*, and the account he gives of the battle of Guilford Courthouse.

\*"After Colonel Preston's return from North Carolina "his health continued to decline. In the month of July, "1781, he spent the evening with his intimate friend, "General Evan Shelby (the father of Governor Isaac "Shelby), and on the morning following (the 28th) he "prepared to attend a regimental muster at Michael "Price's, three miles from Smithfield. His eldest son, "General John Preston, then a youth, accompanied him,

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\* Mrs. Floyd's letters to her son.

“ as did General Shelby. The day was exceedingly hot.  
“ After being on the field a few hours, he beckoned to  
“ his son John to come to him, complained of pain in the  
“ head, and desired to lie down on Price’s bed. A short  
“ time afterwards he requested his son to help him on  
“ his horse; he wanted to go home. When the horse was  
“ brought to the door he made an attempt to put his foot  
“ in the stirrup, sank down, was caught by his son, and  
“ laid on the bed again. By this time he had lost his  
“ speech, but took his son’s hand, rolled up his shirt-  
“ sleeve, and made a sign to his son to bleed him. This  
“ his son could not do. Mrs. Preston was sent for, who  
“ immediately reached the place. Colonel Preston’s  
“ reason had not been staggered in this conflict. He  
“ caught his wife’s hand, kissed it, shed tears and made a  
“ motion to be bled. This could not be done from con-  
“ sternation and ignorance. Soon afterwards the sterto-  
“ rous breathing of apoplexy came on, and about mid-  
“ night he breathed his last. Thus the life of this Chris-  
“ tian gentleman and patriot ended.

“ Colonel Floyd was killed on the 12th of April, 1781.  
“ When the news reached Colonel Preston such were the  
“ feelings produced by it that he was never seen to smile  
“ afterwards.

“ Colonel Preston was above the ordinary height—five  
“ feet eleven inches; he was large, inclined to corpulency,  
“ ruddy, and had fair hair and hazel eyes. His manners  
“ were easy and graceful. He had a well cultivated in-  
“ tellect, and a fine taste for poetry. I remember reading  
“ several beautiful productions of his addressed to my  
“ mother in praise of her domestic virtues. On the 18th

“of June, 1823, this excellent lady expired, after having lived a widow forty years. She desired to be buried in the same grave with her husband; this was done. A tombstone was placed over the grave by their second son, General Francis Preston. No portrait of either was ever taken.”

Besides his widow, Colonel Preston left ten children and many friends to mourn his death.

Colonel Preston exerted a more benign influence upon the people of his section of country than any of his contemporaries. The cardinal virtues of integrity, truth, and courage were attributes of his character, and commanded the respect of all who knew him. These manly attributes were softened and made beautiful by his piety. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church, and went on horseback from his mountain home to Staunton once every year (and oftener, when not prevented by other duties,) to commune with his brethren, as there was no church nearer. Exemplary in all the relations of life, as father, husband, son, brother and friend, he left an unspotted reputation as an inheritance to his children, and an example of unselfish and devoted patriotism to be followed by his countrymen.

John Preston, son of Archibald, was of the Yorkshire branch of the Prestons of England, as is established by the “crest” preserved by his descendants. This “crest” is a tower with an eagle rising from its summit, and the motto is “*Si Dieu Veult*” (*i. e.*, “When we leave the towers of earth (D. V.) we soar to Heaven.”)

Burke—General Armory—gives, “Preston (Preston Richard, Preston Patrick, and Nether Levens, co. West-

moreland; seated here from time immemorial; the parent stock from which sprang the extinct Baronets, the Prestons of the Manor and Abbey of Furness, the Prestons of Holker and of Ellet in Cockerham, co. Palatine Lancaster). Ar. two bars gu. on a canton of the last a cinquefoil or. Crests—First, on a ruined tower ar. a falcon volant of the same, beaked, legged and belled or; second, on a chapeau gu. turned up erm. a wolf or. Motto—*Si Dieu Veult*.

He came with his wife (who was the sister of Colonel James Patton) and children from Donegal, Ireland, and settled in Augusta County, Va., near Staunton, in 1737. He was industrious, manly and pious. In 1747 he died and was buried at "Tinkling Spring," Augusta County, where a monument to his memory has been erected by his descendants. He left a widow, four daughters and one son.

William, born December 25, 1729, died July 28, 1781,\* the subject of the preceding sketch. He left a numerous family. His second son, Francis, was born at Greenfield, near Amsterdam, Botetourt county, Virginia, August 2, 1765, was educated at William and Mary College, Virginia; studied law under Judge George Wythe, and practiced with success in Montgomery, Washington

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\* This date is given by General Francis Preston, his son and executor. The old Bible at Smithfield gives the date of his death on June 22, 1782. I am inclined to believe that the date given by General F. Preston is the correct one from an expression in Mrs. Letitia Floyd's letters to her son, Ben. Rush Floyd. She says his health continued to decline after his return from the battle of Guilford Courthouse in North Carolina. But says that he died on the 28th of June of that year.

and other counties. He married Sarah Buchanan Campbell, daughter of General William Campbell (hero of King's Mountain), and Elizabeth Henry, sister of Patrick Henry, on the 10th of January, 1793; was elected to Congress that year from the Montgomery District, which included Washington county, and served with distinction two terms—1793-'97. His private business then requiring his undivided attention, he declined a re-election. He was commissioned colonel in 1812, and marched with his regiment to Norfolk, but was not engaged in any active campaigns. Subsequently he was commissioned brigadier-general and promoted to major-general of militia; was repeatedly elected to the House of Delegates and Senate of Virginia, where his impressive style of speaking and ability in debate placed him in the front rank among his contemporaries. He was remarkable for his physical strength and manly beauty; was courteous and graceful in manners, chivalrous in spirit, scrupulously truthful and conscientious and exact in business. United with these masculine attributes was a heart as warm and full of tender sympathies as a woman's. Hence the friendship of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Marshall and others with whom he corresponded.

My earliest recollection of him is that of a man in the full prime of life, and as fine a specimen of manhood as I ever looked upon. Just six feet high and of a full, not fleshy figure, with the erect bearing of a soldier and moving with the firm, elastic step so characteristic of the men who in their youth wore moccasins whilst hunting in the mountains. He had the courtly manners of the day and court of Washington. On his arrival in Phila-



delphia as a member of Congress from the Montgomery District, in which Washington county was included, he was recognized and received by General Washington, then President, as the son of an old friend, and treated with courteous attention and consideration.

General Preston died at the house of his son, William Campbell Preston, in Columbia, South Carolina, May 26, 1835. His remains were subsequently removed to the family grave-yard at Aspinvale, Smythe county, Virginia. A monument to his memory was erected by his three sons.

William Campbell Preston was the oldest son of General Francis and Sarah Buchanan Preston, and was born on December 27, 1794, in south Fourth street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His father was at the time a member of Congress, which then held its sessions in that city.

Mrs. Dorothea Madison, wife of President James Madison, and a relation of Mrs. Preston, always claimed that she was the first person that held him in her arms, and through life spoke of him as "her boy."

The following memoir was written by Mrs. Virginia P. Carrington, niece and adopted daughter of William C. Preston, and published in the "Sunny South," August 20, 1887, and signed "A. M.":

His early home was at the Salt-Works, Smythe county, Virginia. This, to the day of his death, he thought the most beautiful spot on earth, and, next to it, the Cove of Cork. The Salt-Works was not then enriched and disfigured by the numerous salt-houses, plaster-banks, small stores and dwellings, which are seen in what is now called Saltville. A few white dwellings, a few long sheds for salt, emphasized the beautiful green of the meadows;

fine forests clothed the hills which prefaced the mountains surrounding the valley; now, the hills and mountains are bare, and the iron horse shrieks through the meadows where yet the finest cattle graze in the richest fields, undisturbed by the new inventions of the century. He was descended of illustrious parentage. His mother's father was General William Campbell, of King's Mountain fame; her mother was Elizabeth Henry, who was said to be as eloquent as her brother, Patrick Henry. His paternal grandfather, William Preston, was one of the surveyors who accompanied Washington in his early examinations of Virginia in the valley and beyond the Alleghanies. He was afterwards greatly distinguished in the Indian wars. When absent from the fort which he commanded his wife took his place, and defended it successfully against the Indians.

The subject of this memoir was well instructed by private tutors until of an age to enter college. He attended for a while Washington College, now Washington and Lee University. Afterwards, his lungs appearing weak, he was sent to South Carolina College, at Columbia; he was so charmed with the climate, the beauty of the city and the elegance of the people that he determined to make it his home. He chose the profession of the law, and was early admitted to the bar. In the practice of his profession he was eminently successful, and made fortune after fortune, which he spent with equal celerity. An instance of his good memory and his knowledge of the English classics occurred at his entrance into South Carolina College. A portion of Homer was given him to translate. He asked if a general, instead of a literal

translation, would do. Upon receiving an affirmative answer he gave page after page of Pope's grand paraphrase. His father, who was wealthy, offered him the opportunity of travel and study in Europe, but insisted he should see something of the wilds of his own country first. So he sent him to the far, far West, where the frontiersman and Indian could be seen in all their pristine glory—even to Missouri! He travelled on horseback with a servant carrying his portmanteau. He was, the next winter, sent to see the highest social circle of America—to Washington. There he was received with the utmost cordiality by his kinswoman, Mrs. Madison, who insisted that he should stay at the White House, which was more delightful from the presence of several charming young ladies, conspicuous among whom was the great belle and beauty, Miss Maria Mayo, who afterwards became Mrs. General Winfield Scott.

His voyage to Europe was slow and tedious, so that when he stopped off the Cove of Cork, he was so weary of the sight of the waste of waters and the beauty of the land was so tempting, that, with his usual impetuosity, he jumped into one of the little boats which had come out to traffic with the passengers and went ashore, sending his luggage on by the ship. He traveled in Ireland until his financial condition compelled him to follow his letters of credit. When he landed in England he had only money enough to take an outside place on the stage, which then carried passengers from the mouth of the river to Liverpool. It was raining, and the wetting he got, together with the fatigue, brought on a fever and consequent delirium, in which state he was taken into

the inn. The landlord, on examining his papers, found letters to the American Consul, who was then, and for many years after, Mr. James Maury, but he being absent, his place was supplied by Mr. Haggarty, of Virginia. He, with the assistance of his friend, Washington Irving, nursed him back to health. Thus, with Washington Irving, began one of his most valued friendships, and one which ended only with death. One of the last things which I read to Mr. Preston, as he lay on his death-bed, was an account of the first celebration of the anniversary of Irving's death. Mr. Irving was already a man of distinction in the world of letters. When Mr. Preston went to London he gave him letters of introduction to Lord Brougham, Lord John Russell and others. Through the letter to Lord John Russell he had an invitation to spend the Christmas at the country house of the Duke of Bedford, where he met many people of distinction. There were some trouble to know how to place the untitled American gentleman. Finally he was consigned to the care of one of the younger sons of the house and went into dinner under his care. Lord Brougham spoke of the relationship between their families. Lord Brougham, Lord Erskine and Patrick Henry were cousins, and all of them nephews of Robertson, the historian.\* Sidney Smith asked to be introduced to him, as he said an American gentleman was quite a curiosity. When he went to Edinborough to enter the University, Mr. Irving gave him a letter of introduction to Sir Walter Scott. Scott was partial to Americans, and paid them much attention.

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\* This has been questioned.



There was a remarkable set of students at that time in Edinborough. Mr. Cogswell, at the Astor Library; J. Fenimore Cooper, Mr. Hugh S. Legare, Mr. Govan, Mr. Everett, and Mr. Ticknor were in Europe at the time and traveled with Mr. Preston on the Continent, but I am not sure they studied together. Sir Walter Scott took a special fancy to Mr. Preston, and he was consequently much at Abbotsford. Mr. Preston asked Sir Walter's advice as to whether it was well for him to accept the invitations to Abbotsford to the house of Mrs. Grant of Laggan (author of "Roy's Wife of Aldervalock"), and other places where literature was a topic of chief interest. Sir Walter said he would scarcely ever meet with such society as was then in and around Edinborough, and he should by all means take advantage of it; he should be diligent also in attending all the lectures at the University, for there was a remarkable set of professors, but his books he could carry with him anywhere. When, years afterwards, he was elected to the Senate, a friend hastened to Laggan to tell Mrs. Grant of the honor bestowed, "Pshaw!" she said; "if those Americans had any sense they would have made him President long ago."

During the vacations he made several pedestrian tours with Mr. Irving; they rambled through Scotland, Northern England and Wales. Many of the scenes of the "Sketch Book" were witnessed together. Mr. Irving wrote to Mr. Preston: "Your allusions to Jones of Brienne and Loch Katrine brought up a host of recollections of pleasant scenes and pleasant adventures, which we enjoyed together in our peregrinations through Scotland and England in our younger days. I often recur in



thought to those ramblings, which present some of the most agreeable day-dreams of past times; and if I dared indulge my pen, could call up many an amusing incident in which you figured conspicuously."

Soon after his return from Europe he married Miss Maria Eliza Coalter, daughter of Judge John Coalter, formerly of Virginia, then of Missouri. Judge Coalter had several beautiful daughters, all of whom married distinguished men. One married Judge William Harper, whom Mr. Preston considered the finest intellect South Carolina ever produced. Another, Judge St. George Tucker, one of Virginia's finest jurists; one Judge Edward Bates, who was afterwards a member of President Lincoln's Cabinet; the youngest married Mr. David Means, an eminent Presbyterian divine.

Mr. Preston became as conspicuous in politics as in law, and for many years represented South Carolina in the Senate, where he ranked with Webster, Clay, Calhoun, and Benton. On his resignation from the Senate Mr. Webster wrote:

"Dear Sir,—Your resignation gives me pain, although you had prepared us to expect it. In the political and social circles here it causes a void not easily to be filled. Your career in the Senate has been long, useful, and splendid; and I believe you leave Congress with the respect and good wishes of all its members. Since I have been in my present situation, I have derived important aid from your advice and occasional suggestions—an obligation I most cheerfully acknowledge, but I owe you a much greater debt, for your constant personal kindness,

from the social happiness derived from your conversation, and for the gratification and instruction derived from your efforts in debate. This, my dear sir, is entirely honest and sincere. I am melancholy at your leaving the Senate, and could not forego this occasion to signify to you my ardent feelings of attachment and regard. Kind remembrances to Mrs. Preston; there again I have heavy losses. With whom shall I now converse on Biblical criticism, old English style and other kindred subjects. I salute, also, Miss Preston, with very sincere regards; and wish for you all true and everlasting happiness.

DANIEL WEBSTER."

Mrs. Preston here alluded to was Senator Preston's second wife, who had been Miss Louisa Penelope Davis, the daughter of an eminent physician of Columbia, South Carolina. She was a lady of great beauty of person and remarkable literary attainments. Although much younger than Mr. Preston, he outlived her thirteen years, and he always said his heart died with her; but he was much revived in his last years by the love of an adopted daughter. Miss Preston, of whom Mr. Webster speaks, was the only child who attained maturity; her father's tender, loving heart was crushed by her death.

Mr. Preston was a great patron of the arts. He was the means of sending the sculptor, Hiram Powers, to Italy; that is, he recognized his genius, and called the attention of his brother, Mr. John S. Preston, to him, and he supplied most of the means which enabled Mr. Powers to prosecute the studies which have placed him first among American artists. Mr. Powers has shown his

gratitude in many ways—by bestowing the name of Preston on his son, who is now eminent among sculptors; by gifts of his works; several portrait busts were presented to the family. His Eve, Proserpine, and Genevia were made for Mr. John S. Preston. Mr. W. C. Preston also assisted Mr. Chapman to go to Italy to study painting. Shortly before Mr. Preston's death, Mr. Chapman sent him several etchings and some photographs of his large paintings.

Mr. Preston was made president of South Carolina College, in which capacity he served for many years, to the great advantage of the institution and of the young men under him. In general, he enjoyed it, but I heard him say once, when the boys were rather unruly, that he "would rather drive an earthquake with a team of volcanoes than a set of wild boys." He was a man of powerful influence in the politics of his State. He was beloved by the least child and the greatest intellects. He honored and admired woman to such a degree that he habitually said no man was worthy of any woman. He was very active in nullification. When the secession in the Democratic party took place in Charleston, in 1860, his heart broke, for he had studied the relations between the States and the strength and purpose of each and all, so that he knew what a fearful struggle was impending. As he lay dying Mr. Petigru, the great Charleston lawyer and his contemporary, came to see him, and they wept together over the coming strife. Mr. Petigru said: "I envy you, Preston. You are leaving us, and I will have to stay and see it all. And so he gladly bade fare-

well to earth on May 22d, rejoicing in hope of the world to come. A. M.”

To this graceful and graphic sketch the following sequel is appended:

No report nor synopsis of his greatest efforts as an orator have been preserved. Among the first was his speech before the Legislature of South Carolina in defence of Judge James, who was impeached for drunkenness. In preparing this speech, which was done with elaborate care, the pathetic portion of it rose so palpably before him that he rested his head upon the desk and wept like a child.

When the House was called to order every seat was occupied, and the aisles and galleries crammed. As he rose there was a hush that made breathing audible. His manner was grave and dignified as became the occasion, and the opening sentences caught and fixed the attention of the assembly. The argumentative portion was clear, spirited and able, and when he felt that his audience was in full sympathy with him he drew a picture of this pure and able judge, bowed and humiliated by a single infirmity, so pathetic that the whole assembly was moved to tears, and senators sobbed aloud. This effort confirmed his reputation as the first orator of the South.

At the bar he ranked among the ablest and most learned lawyers of his day, and was as successful in the management and preparation of civil as criminal cases. The latter, however, offered opportunities for the display of his peculiar gifts. The trial of Mr. —— for murder

was one in which his tact, ability and eloquence were conspicuous. The evidence was strong against his client, and the only plea upon which any hope of acquittal could be founded was that of self-defence. His quick and retentive memory recalled a very similar case in which Cicero had succeeded upon the same plea. In his speech he not only availed himself of the ingenious defence of the Roman orator, but captivated the jury and the audience by a paraphrase of his glowing and most impassioned eloquence. Indeed, so full was his mind of classic and modern instances, that often in the familiarity of the home circle his conversation was interspersed with apt quotations in prose and poetry from the best authors. Few were as familiar with the English classics as he was, and for the edification of the younger members of his family he would recite scenes from Shakespeare or passages from Milton, Scott, or some other standard author.

As a popular orator he was fully the peer of his maternal uncle, Patrick Henry. Many instances could be given of his absolute sway over the emotions of large assemblies, and his power of rousing them to the most tumultuous enthusiasm, or melting them to tears, or convulsing them with laughter. The memory of one such instance still lingers in Southwest Virginia after the lapse of half a century. It was during a canvass for Congress between Mr. Draper and Mr. Charles C. Johnston. Mr. Preston was staying with his family at Chilhowie Springs. The mass-meeting was at Meek's Store-house, about five miles distant. Mr. Draper was represented by John N. Humes, a young lawyer recently from Tennessee. By some acci-



dent, neither Mr. Johnston nor any speaker authorized to represent him could be present. In this extremity his partisans sent a delegation in haste to Mr. Preston to urge him to come to their assistance, and to give him some idea of the attack that would be made upon an intimate friend and relation. Their representations roused Mr. Preston, and he hastened to the rendezvous. His arrival was kept a secret, and, unobserved, he entered the rear of the house from the piazza from which the speakers were to address the crowd. Mr. Humes, all unconscious of his presence, and thinking he had the field to himself, indulged in unguarded assertions and bitter denunciations of Mr. Johnston. When he closed, Mr. Preston presented himself before the audience, and, straightening up to his full height (six feet two inches), stood, the impersonation of the champion that he was. The effect was electric. Mr. Humes ventured to suggest that Mr. Preston had no right to speak in a Virginia canvass, as he was a South Carolinian. His friends took it up, and for a few moments the crowd was agitated. Then Mr. Preston's voice, like a clarion, thrilled through it as he said: "My foot is on my native heath and my name is William Campbell Preston." Instantly every murmur was repressed, and the whole assembly settled into the attitude of fixed attention. He alluded to the fact that almost within the sound of his voice rested the bones of four generations of his people, and named the companions of his boyhood with whom he had roamed over hill and dale of that neighborhood, and these companions were sons of that gallant band of heroes whom his grandfather had led in the battle of King's Mountain. The

chord of sympathy was struck and vibrated in harmony to every touch he gave. The crowd was roused to the wildest enthusiasm. It was an easy task to vindicate Mr. Johnston before such an audience, and this was done so fully and effectually that every imputation was silenced forever. Mr. Preston then turned his batteries upon Mr. Humes, and, pointing at him as the recent importation from Tennessee, held him up before the crowd in every aspect of ridicule and scorn that his excited feelings suggested. Passages of this speech were remembered and quoted as long as those who heard it lived.

Of Mr. Preston's speeches in the Senate of the United States, one of the most carefully prepared and effective, was upon the French spoliation claims. He had been examining into the subject for some time and collecting information from every source. The discussion of the question was interrupted for a day by other business, and he went to the Senate that morning expecting some other senator would resume it and occupy the morning session. No one did, however, and unexpectedly the duty devolved upon him. As soon as it was known in the House of Representatives that Mr. Preston was speaking there was a rush for the Senate Chamber, and in a very little while every seat was occupied, and the gallery crowded. For two hours he held the audience spellbound; and not even the rustling of a lady's garments broke the silent and absorbed attention of senators and the mixed audience of the galleries. Details and facts, which would in other hands have been tedious and dry, sparkled with interest and were inspired with life. The style and manner of his delivery were in harmony with the highest ideals of

senatorial dignity, and elicited encomiums and praise from Clay, Webster and others of the brightest intellects of the period.

Mr. Preston's vocabulary was singularly voluminous, and both in conversation and speaking, his choice of words was felicitous and exact. Hence the grace and beauty, as well as lucidness, of his sentences. His voice was clear and melodious and capable of great modulation. Elocution was a natural endowment, but was so cultivated and trained that in the most impassioned passages of his speeches he neither strained his voice to an unnatural pitch nor mouthed his words. He was, therefore, distinctly heard by the most remote of the largest audiences he addressed. His gestures were so natural and graceful that they were observed only when they gave point or emphasis to the idea expressed.

In short, to use the language of a competent and learned critic, "he was the most finished orator America has produced."

John S., son of Francis and Sarah B. Preston, was born at the Salt-Works, Virginia, April 20, 1809; died in Columbia, South Carolina, May 1, 1881; graduated at Hampden-Sidney College; attended lectures at the University of Virginia 1825-'6; then went to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and began the study of law.

He married Caroline M. Hampton, daughter of General Wade Hampton, April 28, 1830, and first settled in Abingdon. After the death of General Hampton he moved to Columbia, South Carolina. For some years he was largely engaged in sugar-planting in Louisiana, but was never

so absorbed by business that much of his time was not devoted to literary pursuits. He retired early and rose between 3 and 5 A. M., that the quiet of the morning hours might be given to intellectual occupations. The aid he liberally gave struggling artists of America, notably to the sculptor Hiram Powers, whose genius was recognized and brought to his notice by his brother, William C. Preston, is only one of many instances and acts of his generosity, and also indicates his love of the fine arts. In part acknowledgment of this timely assistance, Mr. Powers presented him with the first replica of the Greek Slave. He also became widely known as an orator, delivering among other famous addresses the speech of welcome to the Palmetto Regiment on its return from the Mexican War, in 1848, which gave him a national reputation. This was increased by subsequent orations before the '76 Association of Charleston; the literary societies of South Carolina College, and that at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the battle of King's Mountain, and at laying the corner-stone of the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee. These orations were of absorbing interest and force, and of themselves entitled General Preston to the first rank among southern orators. He was an ardent secessionist, and in May, 1860, was chairman of the South Carolina delegation to the Democratic Convention at Charleston.

After the election of President Lincoln, he was appointed commissioner to Virginia, and in February, 1861, made an elaborate plea in favor of the withdrawal of the State from the Union. This was regarded as the

crowning effort of his oratory, and was spoken of in terms of the highest eulogy by all who heard it.

He was on General P. G. T. Beauregard's staff in 1861, and acted as one of the aides-de-camp in the first battle of Manassas or Bull Run. Subsequently he was transferred to the Conscript Department, with the rank of Brigadier-General. Not long after the surrender he left this country for England, and remained abroad two or more years. Some time after his return he was asked to deliver an address at the commencement of the University of Virginia. The character and sentiments of this speech have been misunderstood and misrepresented. It was a fervid and bold expression of opinions formed from a southern view of history, and which alone justify the action of the Southern States.

Subjugation may repress, but does not change convictions, and southern leaders, whilst they acquiesce in the arbitrament of war, honestly believed the cause they maintained with their fortunes and their lives was just in the sight of God. General Preston voiced this conviction, and remitted its vindication to posterity. Such utterances may have been imprudent at the time and under the circumstances, but they were not treasonable; nor were they intended to repress the spirit of reconciliation, so carefully fostered by true patriots, *provided* the faith that animated and sustained the entire South in that sad conflict was not denounced and characterized as wilful and wicked rebellion.

When General Preston surrendered and gave his allegiance to the United States he had no reserved thoughts, and was as loyal a citizen as could be found between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.





## PATTON'S CLAIM TO PRIORITY.

In the "Filson Club Publications, No. 13," entitled "First Exploration of Kentucky," by Colonel J. Stoddard Johnston, there is this note on page 42:

"From the fact that Dr. Walker was here (on the Holston river) in 1748, historians have fallen into the error of stating that it was in this year that he went to Cumberland Gap in company with Colonel James Patton, Major Charles Campbell and others, but there is nothing upon which the assertion rests except a misty tradition.

"It is doubtless based upon the fact that these gentlemen, in 1749, Dr. Walker being one of the number, made an exploration with a view to taking up land, as some of them did on the Holston in East Tennessee."

As I was one of these historians (?) who have fallen into the "error" (if error it be), I may be pardoned for giving the authorities upon which I based the account of Colonel Patton's exploring expedition in 1748, and which was published in the American Monthly Magazine of January, 1897.

First. As to the line through which this alleged "misty" tradition is traced.

My father, General Francis Preston, was a son of Colonel William Preston, who was the nephew, private secretary, and executor of Colonel James Patton; Mrs. Letitia Floyd, wife of Governor John Floyd, was his sis-

ter, and Governor Floyd was the grandson of Colonel John Buchanan, who was the son-in-law of Colonel James Patton, and was one of the surveyors who accompanied him upon this and other expeditions. My mother was the daughter of General William Campbell, only son of Major Charles Campbell, the other surveyor. Major Charles Campbell's wife was the sister of John Buchanan, and grandmother of my mother.

If tradition transmitted through such closely-allied families be "*misty*," then it would be difficult to say by what combination of circumstances and family alliances a tradition could be relied upon as free from "mists."

Second. Joseph A. Waddell, in his "Annals of Augusta County," on page 38, says: "It is stated that as early as 1748, Colonels Patton and Buchanan and others, with a number of hunters, made an exploring tour to the Southwest. They discovered and named the Cumberland Mountain and river, so called in honor of the Duke of Cumberland, who had recently gained the battle of Culloden in Scotland."

In Virginia, Mr. Waddell is accepted as reliable authority for every statement of fact that he makes. Even where he does not give his authority for his assertions, it is assumed that they are supported by and based upon ascertained facts, derived from reliable sources.

I felt warranted by this statement, sustaining the family tradition, in giving to Colonel Patton the credit of discovering and naming Cumberland Mountain and Cumberland river, and suggested the influence which prompted him so to name them.

It may also be noted that Mr. Waddell does not men-

tion Dr. Walker as of the party. Had he occupied the most prominent position it is fair to presume that he would have been named.

Third. Lyman C. Draper, in his "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," page 379, says: "Charles Campbell was not "only an enterprising farmer of Augusta, but early engaged in western explorations and in the acquisition of "the rich wild lands of the country. In April, 1748, he "made an exploring tour down the Holston in company "with Dr. Thomas Walker, Colonel James Patton, James "Wood and John Buchanan, together with a number of "huntsmen and woodsmen."

In this extract the names of the principal parties are given, and the date of the expedition.

Knowing the relation of these parties to each other, their relative positions can be assigned.

The organization indicates Colonel Patton as its author and leader. Of the two surveyors, John Buchanan was his son-in-law, and Charles Campbell, the brother-in-law of John Buchanan, making a family party.

Dr. Walker and James Wood were honored but invited associates, as may be inferred from the sequel. The hunters and woodsmen were, in all probability, from the vicinity and selected by Colonel Patton, from his knowledge of their fitness for the service for which they were employed.

At the date of this expedition, Colonel Patton was about fifty-eight years of age, in the full vigor of robust manhood, and had won influence and distinction in Augusta county, and was regarded as one of the wealthiest men of that community. He was able, therefore, to

equip and support the party that he organized for such an extended and perhaps perilous expedition.

Dr. Walker was also in the prime of life—thirty-three years old, and, by right of his wife, owner of 15,000 acres of land in Piedmont Virginia. He was a worthy associate and friend of Colonel Patton.

It was on this expedition that Reedy Creek, Walker's Mountain, and Walker's Creek, in Wythe county, were named. The Holston river was called "Indian river," as is proved by the earliest surveys. (See patents to Charles Campbell.) Why and when the name was changed, first to Holstein, then to Holston, I have not been able to ascertain. Dr. Walker calls it Holston river as early as March 23, 1750. The changes of name must have been rapid.

Colonel J. Stoddard Johnston has traced with great labor and research the course of Dr. Walker's expedition in 1750. But I can see nothing in it contradicting the assumption and proof of a previous expedition in 1748 with Colonel Patton and his party. The organization of the two parties are widely different. The companions of Dr. Walker are named in his diary, and were his personal friends, for whom he named many of the streams he reached and partly explored, beginning with Powell's river that flows through Lee county, Virginia.

His statement that in 1750 he had met Samuel Stalaker *on the Holston* is conclusive evidence that he himself was there at that time, and the only tradition or mention of an earlier exploring expedition to the waters of the Holston, is that of Colonel James Patton, in 1748.

With all due deference to Colonel Johnston's opinions



and inferences, I am constrained to differ with him in regard to Stalnaker. Dr. Walker says only that when he first met Stalnaker, he (Stalnaker) was on his way to the Cherokee Indians and "expected him to pilot me as far as he knew, but his affairs would not permit him to go with me" (on this expedition of 1750).

No hint is given that Stalnaker was anything more than a trader with the Cherokee Indians, and they lived on the borders of Tennessee and Georgia, south of Dr. Walker's *projected route*.

I do not think it probable (as Colonel Johnston seems to do) that Stalnaker gave the information as to certain localities that he (Dr. Walker) contemplated visiting—such as the valley of the Clinch river, the region north and west of Clinch Mountain, and Cumberland Mountain, to the head-waters of Kentucky and Cumberland rivers, of which previous information he (Dr. Walker) gave evidence as he advanced into Kentucky. It is more probable (in my opinion) that this "previous information" was obtained from a more intelligent source—Colonel James Patton—as will appear from the sequel.

In John P. Hale's "Trans-Alleghany Pioneers" (page 102), he states: "This way (by Inglis' Ferry on New river) passed Dr. Thomas Walker and his *first* party of explorers in 1748, and also his *second* expedition in 1750."

Again, on page 108, he says: "On the return of the expedition of Dr. Walker, Patton and others, in 1748, they organized the 'Loyal Land Company,' based on a grant of 800,000 acres of land, to lie north of the North Carolina line, and west of the mountains, and incorporated their company in June, 1749."

Again, on page 250: "1748.—Dr. Thomas Walker and "party crossed New river westward, and were the *first* "from this direction to *penetrate into* Kentucky." (*Italics mine. T. L. P.*) It has been previously stated how this party of "Dr. Walker and others" of 1748 was organized and commanded. (See page 9.)

The extracts from Hale are given as proof that there were *two* expeditions in which Dr. Walker was a party, and that the *first in 1748*, was "the *first* from this (New river, west) direction to *penetrate into* Kentucky." Mr. Hale repeats on page 109 the statement of the *two* trips of the exploring parties of Dr. Walker, and mentions some of the streams "traveled up and down which empty into New river."

The fact of two trips west of New river being established by proof that cannot be gainsaid, it may be well to examine from whom Dr. Walker obtained information about the country he explored in 1750.

It is stated, or rather intimated, by Colonel J. S. Johnston, that Dr. Walker went on this expedition in the interest of, if not employment of, other parties or persons.

This intimation is confirmed by the opening paragraph of Dr. Walker's journal, as published by the Filson Club. It is—

"Having on the 12th of December last been employed "for a certain consideration to go to the westward in "order to discover a proper place for a settlement, I left "my house on the 6th day of March at 10 o'clock, 1749-'50, "in company with Ambrose Powell, William Tomlinson, "Colby Chew, Henry Lawless and John Hughes." (*Note how entirely different this company is from that organ-*

ized by Colonel Patton.) They reached "English's" (Inglis') on the 16th of March. (See Diary, page 1.)

But the question is, who employed Dr. Walker to go westward "in order to discover a proper place for a settlement?" There can be but one answer, the Loyal Company. As Colonel Patton was at the head of that organization, it could only have been chiefly, if not exclusively, through his influence that Dr. Walker was sent on this tour of discovery of a proper place for a settlement. This company, as stated by Mr. Hale (pages 108 and 250) was organized in June 1749, *after* their return from the expedition in 1748, by Walker, Patton, and others (William Inglis was one of the "others") with a grant of 800,000 acres of land. The Holston Valley into Tennessee had been previously explored. Colonel Patton and William Inglis had crossed Clinch Mountain into Tazewell county through Burk's Garden, and it may be as far north as the headwaters of Clinch river. The country to be explored, therefore, was the Clinch Valley and the region north and west of Clinch and Cumberland mountains. This hypothesis explains the route taken by Dr. Walker, and his deflection from the Holston Valley at Abingdon to the Northwest, and crossing Clinch Mountain, perhaps at Moccasin Gap, and so through Scott to Powell's Valley, in Lee, naming the river that flows through it after his friend, Ambrose Powell, and thence over Cumberland Mountain to the head waters of the Kentucky and Cumberland rivers.

It is remarkable that Dr. Walker does not give the name to any mountain that he crossed, but does give names to every stream of any magnitude and to many

smaller branches. I do not, and cannot, concur in Colonel J. Stoddard Johnston's inference, for it is only an inference, and not an assertion of Dr. Walker's, that he (Dr. Walker) *afterward* named "Cave Gap" Cumberland Gap.

If, as I maintain, Colonel Patton's party "*penetrated into Kentucky*," as John Hale says they did; and named Cumberland Mountain and Cumberland Gap, as Joseph A. Waddell says they did, and the pioneer expedition was organized April, 1748, as Lyman C. Draper states (supplemented by Waddell), then the "*misty tradition*," examined by the light of investigation, like some cloud-capped pinnacle when lighted by the sun is seen to stand upon a sure foundation—the foundation of *historical truth*.

THOS. L. PRESTON.

*University of Virginia, April, 1899.*

NOTE 1.—Colonel Patton and John Buchanan in 1749 went as far west as Bristol, Tennessee (how much further is not known), for in that year Colonel Patton bought the "settlers' right" of one Taylor, and gave it to his son-in-law, John Buchanan, who surveyed it that year. The patent for it, however, was not issued until after General Francis Preston became the executor of Colonel William Preston and General William Campbell, who certified the survey to the court, and the patent was issued by Mr. Jefferson, then Governor of Virginia.

T. L. P.

NOTE 2.—"William Inglis purchased the land at and about Inglis' Ferry from the Loyal Land Company, Dr. Thomas Walker agent."—Dr. John P. Hale, "Trans-Alleghany Pioneer," p. 109.

## SKETCH OF WILLIAM KING.

William King was born in Ireland, 1769, and came to America a lad of fifteen, landing at Newcastle, Delaware, August 17, 1784. He went to Philadelphia and entered into an engagement for five years with a merchant of that city.

He did not know where his father, Thomas King, had settled, and his father was not informed of the arrival in America and employment of his son. As soon, however, as he ascertained that the son was in Philadelphia he started from Fincastle (where he was engaged in business) on horseback, leading a pony to bring his son to his home.

But the young man would not yield even to a father's persuasion, and refused to violate his contract with the merchant and return with his father. He remained, therefore, in Philadelphia until 1791, when he joined his father at Fincastle. Not long afterward his father sent him to Ireland for his stepmother, his brother and sister.

The only members of the family that did not return with him were Connally Findlay and his family. They came five years afterwards, in 1796. Whilst in Ireland William King received a legacy of £100 left him by his grandmother, Elizabeth Davis. With this capital he started as a peddler to make his fortune, and the success he attained shows what intellect and energy can accom-



plish. He soon established stores (as they were called) or mercantile houses along his line of travel, and stocked them with such merchandise as best suited the people of the country. By his repeated trips he acquainted himself with the people and learned their wants.

Wonderfully endowed by nature with quick discrimination, observation and sagacity, his business prospered with phenomenal rapidity, and he soon acquired the position of an influential member of the community. His education and his courteous manners gave him access to every social circle, and he won the confidence of his contemporaries by his integrity and manliness. One of his gifts was rapidity and accuracy in calculation. His accounts were kept in pounds, shillings and pence, and, it is said, he added up the long columns of the old account books by a succession of spans or hand-breadths. In 1799 he married Miss Mary Trigg, one of the handsomest and most elegant daughters of that old family, and built the first brick residence in Abingdon. There he made his home, and there it stands diagonally across the street north of the court-house.

Mr. King, as most English-born subjects, wished to entail his estate, and as he had no children, he decided to make such dispositions that some branch of his family should inherit the bulk of it. The acquisition of his valuable property at the Salt-Works and the conditions of the will by which he attempted to dispose of it have been referred to in the "Reminiscences."

William King died in 1808. Am I not justified in saying that the crowning act of his life was the bequest of

\$10,000 to "The Academy" as a school for boys? No memorial shaft or proud mausoleum could so enduringly perpetuate his wisdom and beneficence. These may crumble and mingle with the dust, but so long as that hill stands, crowned by the academy, the name of William King will be gratefully recalled by successive generations. His widow married Captain Francis Smith, and their descendants are among the most refined and cultivated of the present generation.



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